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NEW YORK, MAY 27, 192.

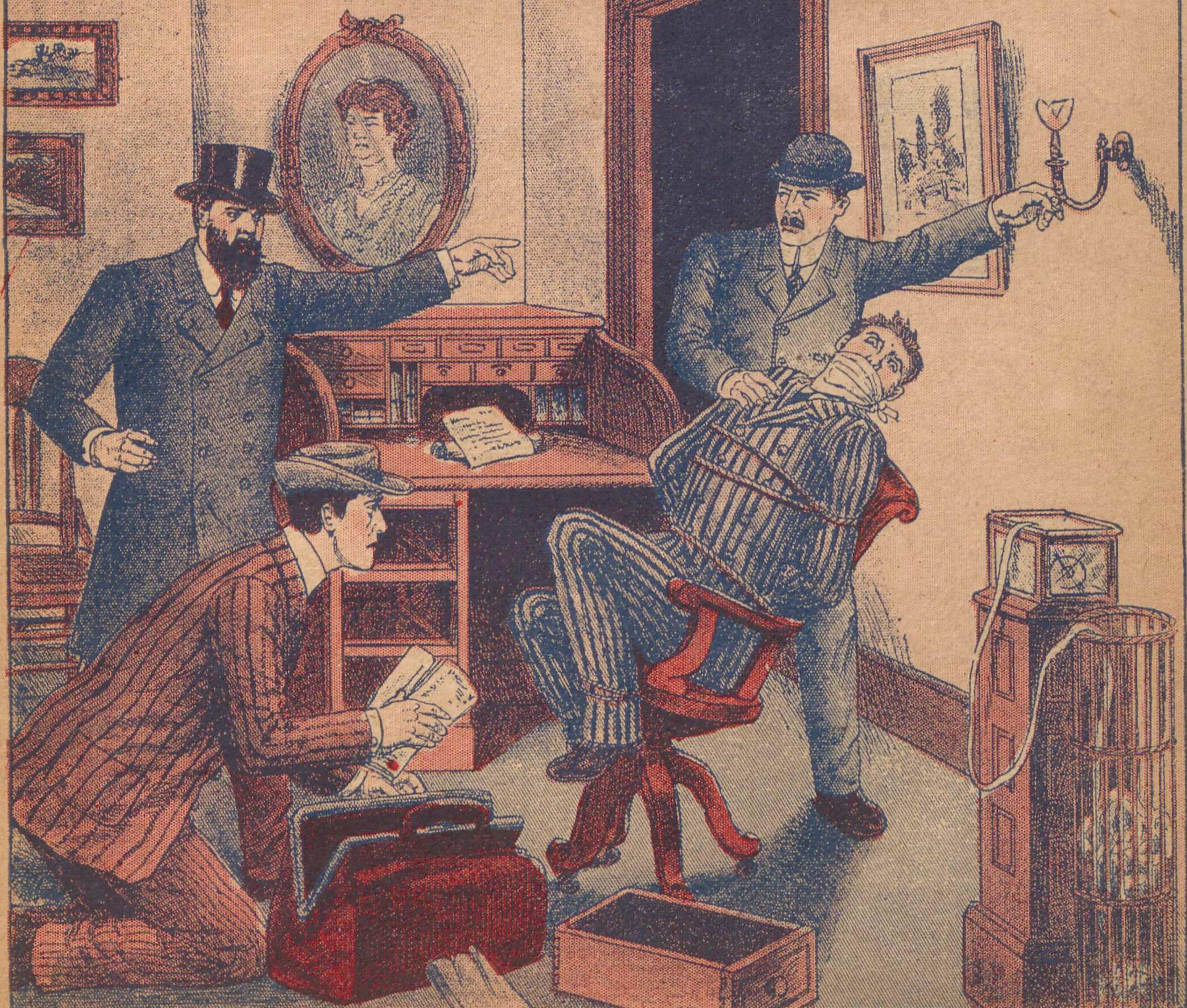
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FAME AND FORTUNE STORIES OF BOYS WEEKLY WHO MAKE MONEY.

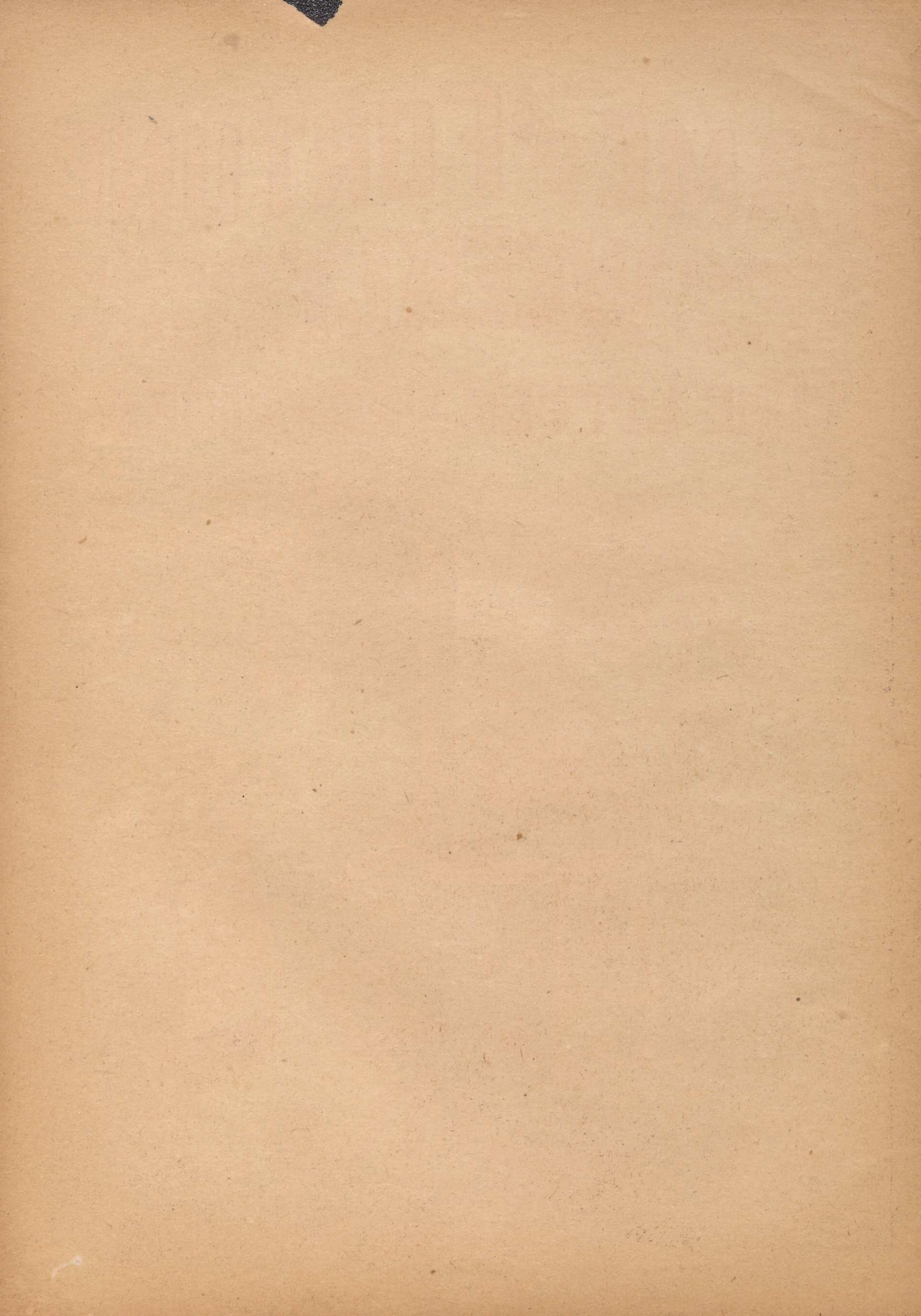
THE LITTLE OPERATOR; OR, CORNERING THE "BEARS" OF WALL STREET.

AND OTHER STORIES

A SELF-MADE MAN.



"Dead boys tell no tales," said Nathan Notte, pointing at the gas fixture. "When we leave this room you'll be slowly asphyxiated. 'Tis an easy death, and a sure one. The paper will show that you committed suicide."



FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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NEW YORK, MAY 27, 1927

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THE LITTLE OPERATOR

OR, CORNERING THE "BEARS" OF WALL STREET

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—An Off-Hand Introduction.

"She's a mighty pretty girl, Dick," said Fred Whitaker.

"Bet your life she is," replied Dick Markham.

"She's got the face of an angel and seems to be as modest as she is pretty."

"You seem to be gone on her, old chap," laughed Dick.

"Nonsense! I wonder who she is?"

"Some working girl out for a holiday."

"I don't fancy the young lady who is with her."

"Neither do I. Too bold and forward to suit me. Most fellows would call her a daisy, though, for she's well dressed and has a lot of style about her. There, she's looking at us. Get on to that sly smile. I'll bet a dollar she's trying to get up a flirtation with us. What do you say, shall we catch on? That will give you the opening I know you're looking for to get acquainted with the angel, as you call her. I don't mind pairing off with the daisy to give you a chance with the other."

Without waiting for Fred to answer, Dick tipped his hat to the stylish girl and received an encouraging smile in return.

"Come on, Fred. I'm going over to speak to her."

Thus speaking, Dick Markham left the table where he and Fred had been sitting for the past half-hour watching the crowd which thronged the summer resort that hot August afternoon, and enjoying the refreshing ocean breeze that swept in from the sun-kissed waters which lapped the beach within a hundred yards of where they sat. There was nothing slow about Dick, who was a Wall Street messenger. Although he had said that he didn't fancy the stylish girl who was with the pretty but plainly dressed one that his companion so much admired, nevertheless he was rather eager to make her acquaintance. He walked right over to the table where the two girls sat by themselves, and, raising his hat again, said:

"I beg your pardon, miss, but I think we have met before."

"Possibly we have, but I don't recall just where and when," replied the stylish girl with a bewitching glance, half of welcome, half of defiance, while her companion looked up in a startled way.

"My name is Dick Markham."

"Indeed! I have a cousin named Dick. My

name is—what would you give to know?" she said saucily.

"It is only fair you should tell me, since I've introduced myself," said Dick.

"But you ought to remember it if we've met before," said Dick mischievously.

"Oh, I've got the worst memory in the world for names."

"But not for faces," she laughed.

"That's right. Your face is so like—so like that of a certain young lady I met at the ball of the Criterion Club last February at Terrace Garden that I could almost swear—"

"Oh, you must not do that, Mr. Markham," said the young lady with a rippling laugh which quite captivated Dick, although her jet-black eyes and fascinating ways had already accomplished that.

"Oh, you know what I mean," blurted Dick, conscious that he was no match for the charmer whom he had so rashly intruded on. "Her name was—was—"

Dick scratched his head and looked appealingly at the laughing young lady.

"Well, I'm waiting to hear. Really, I am intensely interested in her identity. Was she pretty?"

"Pretty! She was a peach!"

"And you say I resemble her?" said the girl, with a bewitching sidelong look which is irresistibly fetching in young ladies who have got it down fine, and this one had it to perfection.

"You are the very picture of her," replied Dick enthusiastically.

"Now that is quite a compliment," she laughed again. "What a pity—you can't remember her name."

"If you'll tell me yours maybe—"

"Well, mine is Elise Reece."

"Thanks. I guess you're not the same girl, but still—"

"Well?" tantalizingly.

"If you have no objection to my friend and I passing a little while in the society of yourself and your friend, why—"

"Oh, I have no objection. Call your friend over by all means. He looks kind of lonesome sitting by himself. I am sure he is not enjoying himself. First, let me make you acquainted with my friend. Ruby, dear, this is Mr. Markham. Mr. Markman, Miss Ray."

Dick bowed in a gallant way. Ruby Ray, how-

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ever, barely acknowledged the introduction. Her face flushed, and she seemed ill at ease.

"Hi, Fred!" called Dick. "Come over here. You're wanted."

Fred, who didn't have his companion's nerve at making the acquaintance of strange ladies, hesitated a moment, but finally came. Dick introduced him to both girls, just as if they were old friends of his, and, after winking at Fred and nodding at the chair on the other side of the lovely Ruby, sat down himself next to Miss Reece and devoted himself entirely to her in a way that showed he was quite struck with her charms. Fred realized that the girl he so much admired was far from being a flirt. She showed evident embarrassment in his company, and he saw that he had an uphill job before him to overcome her diffidence. On the whole, he was glad to find that she was not at all like her companion. He would have been disappointed and not pleased had she made up to him as the other was doing to Dick.

"I'm afraid, Miss Ray," he said, "this introduction is a bit too off-hand to please you. I am sorry, and will withdraw if my presence offends or distresses you."

The tone of his voice, and the consideration for her feelings which his words conveyed, had their effect on the girl, and she raised her eyes and looked at him. That look had more weight with him than all the glances in the world. Her innocent soul seemed mirrored in her eyes. Fred had never seen such eyes before—they were those of a Madonna, whose inmost nature was as pure as her features were faultless and attractive. The boy knew he was in the presence of as good and sweet a girl as ever lived, and he felt he could go through fire and water, make any sacrifice, in fact, for her.

"You are very kind to make the suggestion," she replied. "I can see that you are a gentleman."

"Thank you, Miss Ray, for saying so. I trust I am at least enough of a gentleman not to press my society on you if it annoys you."

"The consideration you show for me excuses the impropriety of our introduction. I am sure I hardly know what you think of my companion or myself for permitting two strangers like yourself and your friend to make our acquaintance. I feel greatly embarrassed over the matter."

"I feel sure it was none of your seeking, Miss Ray. Your deportment proves that; but I hardly know how to act, as my friend seems greatly taken with your friend, and appears to have anchored himself alongside of her. They doubtless expect us to entertain each other. To prove to you that I have some standing in the business world, and therefore a character to maintain, permit me to hand you my card, with my name, business, and office address."

Fred took a card out of his vest pocket and presented it to her. She looked at it.

"You are in business for yourself in Wall Street, I see," she said, regarding him with some interest.

"I am. I buy stocks and bonds on commission for anyone who calls on me for that purpose; but chiefly I am a speculator in the stock market on my own account."

"And your friend?"

"He works for a Wall Street firm of brokers as their messenger. We have known each other for five or six years, went to school together, in fact, and are what might be considered chums."

"He does not appear to be a bashful boy," she said, with a half smile.

"No. He is certainly pretty nervy when it comes to making advances to young ladies with whom he is not acquainted," laughed Fred.

"It would seem so."

The ice now broken between them, Fred got on pretty well with his fair companion, who he learned was employed in a large paper-box factory on the lower West Side of New York. Miss Reece also worked in the same shop, but drew larger wages because, having been longer at the business, she was more proficient.

By degrees Fred found out that Ruby lived with her widowed mother in a cheap tenement on the East Side, and that they had some difficulty in making ends meet, because there were time, during the summer, when work was dull and her income barely enabled her mother and herself to get on with the strictest economy. Ruby never would have thought of confiding so much to a stranger but for the fact that Fred's manner was so courteous and sympathetic that he won his way into her good graces, and being naturally of a trustful nature, where once she was attracted to a person, she talked quite freely about herself. Fred, on his part, was equally frank with her.

He told her that his father had been dead about ten years, and that he was living with his mother and a young sister, who attended school, in a small, but very nice Harlem apartment. She learned that when he graduated from a grammar school he went to work for a Wall Street broker as office boy and messenger, and finally rose to become a junior clerk in the counting-room. While acting as messenger he had contracted a liking for speculating in the market, which he followed with pretty fair success for more than a year, thereby accumulating a few thousand dollars over and above his wages. The death of his employer, and the closing out of the business by the widow, had thrown him out of a job three months since, but instead of looking for another position he rented a room in a Wall Street skyscraper and started out on his own hook.

"I haven't set the woods afire yet with what I have done," he concluded laughingly; "but when business starts up again next month I hope to make a showing, and eventually make a good business for myself."

"You must be a smart boy," she replied with a glance of admiration.

"I hope I am, for it requires smartness to make one's way ahead in this world."

He then interested her with a description of how business was carried on in Wall Street, and explained what made it the great money center of the country. While they were getting on very nicely together, Dick was talking nonsense to his charmer, and, apparently making great advances with the young lady. As a matter of fact, the young people were well paired. Fred's conversation would not have greatly interested Miss Reece, while Dick would have found Ruby Ray very poor company.

"Well," said Dick at length, "I think it's about

time we treated the young ladies to a soda or ice-cream, whichever they prefer. Talking is dry work, and a little liquid refreshment is about the right caper, I apprehend."

This remark on his part seemed to meet with Miss Reece's approval. She and Dick rose from the table and looked at Fred and Ruby as if expecting them to follow. The young Wall Street operator looked inquiringly at his companion.

"Do you object to having an ice cream with me?" he said. "If you do we will remain here till my friend and yours return. I think, however, that we ought to go along."

Ruby hesitated and blushed a little.

"You need not be afraid to trust yourself with me, Miss Ray, notwithstanding the unusual manner of our introduction. I assure you I will look out for you with just as much care as if you were my sister."

His words and look reassured her, and she consented to go with him to a near-by pavilion where ice cream and soda, as well as other soft drinks, were dispensed. The four took their places at a table by themselves and passed another half-hour very pleasantly together. Miss Reece then looked at her watch and said she expected to meet her uncle at five o'clock at a place she did not describe.

"So," she said, "we'll have to bid you good-by, thanking you boys for the good time you have given us."

"Can't we walk with you to the place where you expect to meet your uncle?" asked Dick eagerly.

"Oh, dear, no. My uncle might not care to see us in the company of two young men who are practically strangers to us," she replied, with a wicked little laugh.

Thus speaking, she grabbed Ruby by the arm and marched off, after casting a tantalizing glance over her shoulder at Dick.

CHAPTER II.—Fred Makes a Startling Discovery.

"Oh, bother her uncle!" growled Dick, in a tone of disgust and disappointment. "I was figuring on taking Miss Reece into half the shows on the island. She's all to the good, and I was expecting to have a fine time with her when she brings her blamed uncle into the matter and I'm left in the lurch."

"You seem to have changed your opinion about the young lady," said Fred, who was a bit put out himself at losing Ruby's society.

"How?"

"When, before we made the acquaintance of the girls, I said I didn't fancy her much, you said ditto, because she was too bold and forward."

"Oh, she's all right. How did you get on with her friend?"

"First rate. She's a fine girl."

"She's pretty, but she isn't in it with Elise Reece otherwise. Miss Reece is just my style of a girl. Nothing backward about her. Falls right in with everything you say. I think I made myself pretty solid with her. At any rate, if this uncle of hers had only kept away, I should have got on to the queen's taste. I don't see why uncles

should come down here butting in where they're not wanted."

"Maybe the uncle excuse was just a trick of hers to give us the quiet shake," said Fred, as the idea struck him.

"Do you think so?" said Dick. "Let's follow them and see."

"No. We have no right to push matters too far. You have a great nerve, anyway, to introduce yourself. Some girls would have been insulted and said things you wouldn't have liked."

"Oh, fudge! She encouraged me, and I took advantage of a good thing."

"That's all right. They've dropped us, so we'll let them go."

Dick was clearly not satisfied with the way things had turned out. Elise Reece had made a great impression on him, and he felt as if his pleasure had been spoiled for the rest of the day. Fred also felt disappointed, but as he knew where Ruby worked in New York he was confident he would be able to meet her again. Miss Reece had not confided anything to Dick, for she wasn't of the confiding kind, and consequently that young man was at sea as far as she was concerned. Fred and his chum wandered around the island for another hour in an aimless way, taking very little interest in the free sights.

"Let's have dinner now, old chap, and then we'll take in the 'Bowery,'" said the little operator.

"All right. I'll toss with you to see who pays the meal."

"No, you won't. I'm going to stand treat this trip."

Dick made no objection to that, so they went into a first-class restaurant, which was fairly crowded, found half a table and gave their orders. It was growing dark by the time they left the restaurant, and they started for the street where the vaudeville shows were in full blast. They picked one out and entered. No charge was made for admission, but the patron was expected to make good in the way of drinks. When the boys took their seats at a small round table, the nearest waiter promptly made his appearance.

"What'll yer 'ave?" he asked in a Cockney accent.

"Soda for me," said Dick.

"You can bring me a sarsaparilla," said Fred.

The waiter presently brought the refreshments which Dick paid for, tipping him a nickel; then the boys turned their attention to the small stage, where a serio-comic lady in abbreviated skirts of fancy design was warbling a popular song. After the singer had obligingly answered an encore, a couple of knock-about artists of the burnt-cork variety came out and tried to show how funny they could be when they tried real hard. While they were executing their stunts Dick suddenly grabbed Fred by the arm.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" he exclaimed.

"What's the matter?" asked Fred.

"Look who's just come in. If it isn't the girls and the uncle!"

Fred looked and saw a well-dressed but hard-featured man, with a closely clipped mustache, walking up the passage near-by, followed by Miss Reece and Ruby Ray. Ruby seemed to be walking very unwillingly, and Miss Reece had her arm around her forcing her on. The show had no further interest for the boys, but for very dif-

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ferent reasons. Neither liked the looks of the man. There was something repellent in his face and manner. If this was Miss Reece's uncle, he did not seem to be a credit to the family—assuming, of course, that the Reece family was all right. Fred began to feel a fresh and tremendous interest in Ruby now. It seemed clear that she had entered the show against her will. Fred was glad to see that, as he rather objected to such places for nice young girls, though it is true they were respectable enough in their way. Still Fred wouldn't have taken his mother or sister, or any lady friend, there, and what he didn't think good enough for them he didn't think good enough for Ruby Ray, of whose character he had formed a very high opinion.

"Why in thunder did that man come in here with the girls?" he said to Dick. "He isn't a countryman by long odds. He knows the ropes, if anyone does. I don't like his face a little bit."

"Neither do I," replied Dick. "I don't see where Miss Reece's taste is to shake a good-looking chap like me for that old lobster. If I'd been her I'd have forgotten I had a date to meet him, and let him hunt me up, which wouldn't be an easy job among fifty or sixty thousand people."

"I think he ought to have taken them into one of the parks," said the little operator.

"Maybe he didn't want to come up with the price," chuckled Dick. "There are so many shows in the parks that to give a couple of nice girls like them a good time would make a five-dollar bill look sick."

Fred made no reply. His whole attention was centered on Ruby. The party of three took a table only a short distance away, but as the girls had their backs to them they did not see the boys. At an adjacent table sat a well-to-do-looking man, somewhere under the influence of liquor. Miss Reece's uncle sat within easy reach of him. When the waiter brought a beer and two sodas to the table the uncle took the beer and pushed the soft drinks over to the girls. Miss Reece seemed in high good spirits, but Ruby appeared much embarrassed. At this point a Dutch comedian appeared on the stage and began to make a funny speech. The well-to-do man seemed greatly tickled at his performance. He called the waiter up and ordered another drink, put his hand in his pocket and half drew out a thick wallet, when the Dutchman said something that hit his fancy and he removed his hand and began to clap vociferously. Then something happened that made Fred, who saw it, gasped with astonishment, as well as indignation.

Miss Reece's uncle, after a rapid sidelong glance at the gentleman, furtively extended his hand, pulled the wallet out of the man's pocket and passed it to Miss Reece, who slipped it into Ruby's lap so dexterously that the poor girl was not aware of the proceedings. Dick happened to be looking at the stage at the moment, and he didn't see what happened. Fred was so staggered that he simply sat and gazed at the three with open mouth. The revelation of the character of Miss Reece and her uncle, if he really was her uncle, had stunned him. As he recovered from the shock a feeling of intense indignation shot through his brain at the idea of such an innocent girl as Ruby Ray being in the company of such people. It was

an outrage, and he determined to warn her at any risk to himself.

"She's being made a stool-pigeon of," he breathed. "Why, the first thing she knows she'll be in a peck of trouble. By Jupiter, I'll save her! She's the best little girl in the world, and it's my duty to protect her."

As he half rose in his seat the waiter brought the drink to the well-dressed man. He put his hand to his pocket to pay for it, and missed his wallet. He looked around on the floor. At that moment Miss Reece's uncle rose, whispered something to the girl, and started to leave the table. The well-to-do man sprang up and grabbed him by the arm.

"Here, I say, hand over my pocketbook!" he said in a loud voice that attracted general attention.

"Your pocketbook!" sneered the uncle, shaking off his hand roughly. "You're crazy, man!"

"You're a thief!" roared the gentleman, seizing him again.

"You're a liar!" cried the uncle, striking his accuser to the floor.

In a moment the hall was the scene of wild confusion.

CHAPTER III.—Fred Befriends Ruby.

When Miss Reece's uncle floored the plundered man, Ruby uttered a slight scream and started to rise, but Elise grabbed her and held her down, at the same time fumbling in her lap.

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed Dick, who wasn't wise to the real facts of the case. "That drunken lobster has started a nice peck of trouble for Miss Reece's uncle and the girls. There'll be a cop in here in a moment. Let's get the young ladies out before matters get any worse."

"Sit down," cried Frank, pushing him back in his chair. "I saw the whole thing. Miss Reece's uncle pinched the man's wallet, passed it to Miss Reece, and she dropped it in Miss Ray's lap."

"What!" gasped Dick. "You're dreaming, aren't you?"

"No, I'm not dreaming. Miss Reece's uncle is a crook, and she isn't much better. Pretty company for that poor working girl to be in."

"Good Lord!" palpitated the astonished Dick.

"The question is, what's to be done to save Miss Ray? She's got the wallet, but doesn't know it. If—"

"How do you know she doesn't know it? She may be as bad as the others."

"I'll stake my life on her honesty," said Fred.

"You're a chump," growled the disgusted Dick. "If one is guilty I don't see why the three aren't in the same boat."

"If you had used your eyes you'd have seen that Miss Ray came in here against her will. I know it, for I watched her."

"That may have been a bluff."

"I won't hear a breath of suspicion against that girl," said Fred angrily. "Something has got to be done to save her. Suppose the three of them are searched, the wallet will be found on her. Then she as well as the others, will be arrested and taken to the station. That would break the poor girl's heart."

"Well, what do you suggest? If I can be of any use, count on me," said Dick.

"I'm trying to think. Look at that Miss Reece now. I believe she's trying to put the wallet in Miss Ray's pocket."

Dick looked and saw that while Miss Reece had one arm thrown around Ruby's neck and was whispering to her, the other hand was in the girl's lap. While Fred and Dick were arguing over the situation, a scene of confusion was taking place around the spot where the theft had taken place. The proprietor of the hall made his appearance from the direction of the stage, and rushed over to the scene of the disturbance.

"Here, what is the meaning of this row?" he demanded.

"I've been robbed and assaulted by that man," said the well-to-do man, who had recovered himself, pointing at Miss Reece's uncle. "I demand that he be searched."

"Me searched! Why, confound you——"

"Hold on," said the proprietor. "On what grounds do you charge this man with robbing you? Such a thing has never happened in my show."

"He sat near me, and no one else could have taken it."

"Are you sure you had a pocketbook?" sneered the uncle.

"Am I sure? Why, I had my hand on it a moment before I missed it. I remember seeing you lean over toward me."

"The trouble with you is you're half drunk, and you don't know anything," replied Miss Reece's uncle.

"How dare you say I'm drunk, you rascal!" cried the well-to-do man, trying to hit the accused, but was prevented by the bouncer of the establishment.

"Anybody can see that you are," sneered the other.

"If you don't have that man searched right here I'll report the matter to the police, and that will give your show a black eye," said the gentleman, who seemed sobered by the loss of his wallet.

"To satisfy this man, will you submit to be searched?" asked the proprietor.

"It's an outrage to ask a man to submit to," replied the uncle, "but as I haven't got his pocketbook I'll let you search me."

As he spoke he looked toward Miss Reece in a significant way.

"Come, Ruby, dear, let us go," Elise said.

Both of the girls rose from the table, Ruby pale and trembling, clinging to the girl she believed to be her friend. As they started to make their way out they came face to face with Fred and Dick. Ruby flushed to her hair and tears of mortification sprang into her eyes. Elise, on the other hand, was not a bit rattled.

"Oh, boys, isn't this a dreadful position for us to be placed in by a drunken loafer?" she exclaimed glibly. "I am so glad you are here. Please lead us out of this place."

"Take charge of Miss Reece," said Fred to his chum; "I'll look after Miss Ray," and he placed his arm protectingly around the poor working girl.

She put her hands to her face and burst into tears.

"Don't cry, Miss Ray. Trust to me, and I'll see that you come out all right. Keep close to me and I'll get you through the crowd."

"Oh, Mr. Whitaker, what must you think of me?" she sobbed.

"There, there! Brace up. I think you're the nicest girl in the world, if you want to know my real sentiments. There, we're through the crowd now. Come over in this corner. Let your friend go on."

Ruby, however, hung back, and looked at Fred in a startled way.

"Don't be afraid, Miss Ray. I've got something to tell you of the utmost importance concerning yourself," said Fred, speaking rapidly, for the girl seemed suddenly to have become afraid of him. "I saw the robbery of that pocket-book."

Ruby opened her eyes wide and stared at him.

"Now, don't get excited when I tell you that it was the man who brought you two girls in here who did the trick."

"Elise's uncle!" gasped Ruby. "Oh, it can't be."

"I tell you I saw him take the wallet from the man's pocket and pass it to your friend."

"Pass it to Elise!"

"Yes. She's a bad girl, and not a fit associate for you, Miss Ray."

"Oh, don't say that. Elise is my friend. She——"

"A pretty friend she is! Why, she put the wallet in your lap. I saw her do it."

"Oh, you are not telling me the truth, and I thought you a gentleman!" said Ruby, drawing indignantly away from him.

"Before you judge me, Miss Ray, feel in your pocket. If I am not mistaken the stolen wallet is there this minute—put there by Miss Reece."

Ruby gasped in a frightened way and instinctively put her hand in her pocket. A moment after she drew out the stolen wallet, looked at it in a horrified way, and then uttered a cry like a stricken deer, and would have fallen had Fred not caught her. Snatching the wallet and dropping it in his own pocket, he fanned the poor fainting girl with his hat. At that moment, Miss Reece, impatient at the delay of her companion in coming outside, came in to see what was detaining her.

"Good gracious! What's the matter with Miss Ray?" she cried. "Ruby, dear, what is the trouble?"

Elise's voice brought Ruby back to the realization of her situation.

"Don't touch me. Please go away." And she burst into a fit of weeping and clung instinctively to Fred, whom she seemed to regard now as the only friend she had in her trouble.

"Why, Ruby, dear, what is the matter with me?" cried Miss Reece, astonished at the action of her companion.

"The matter is, Miss Reece," said Fred sternly, "that this poor girl has been terribly deceived in you."

"In me! What do you mean?" flashed Elise, her eyes blazing angrily. "How dare you make such a statement?"

"Miss Reece, the less you have to say the better for you, and the quicker you get away from here the more it will be to your advantage."

"Why, you impudent——"

"Stop, Miss Reece! If you say three words more to me I'll have you arrested."

"Have me arrested?" screamed the furious girl.

"Yes, as the accomplice of that crook you call your uncle. I saw him steal the wallet from the gentleman's pocket and pass it to you, and I saw you drop it in this girl's lap. You're a disgrace to your sex, and you ought to be in jail."

"How dare you say that? Mr. Notte will thrash you within an inch of your life! I'd like to kill you!" She would have flown at Fred and torn his face with her nails only for Dick, who grabbed and pulled her back.

A crowd was beginning to gather around them, and Fred thought it high time to get Ruby away. The girl's alleged uncle was approaching, too, having established his innocence of the theft to the satisfaction of the proprietor of the show. Fred drew Ruby outside, leaving to his chum the difficult task of preventing the frenzied Miss Reece from following.

CHAPTER IV.—Fred Returns the Stolen Wallet to Its Owner.

"Come this way, Miss Ray," said Fred, taking the girl a few steps up the brilliantly lighted thoroughfare, which was alive with people, to the door of an ice-cream parlor. "We'll sit here and have a cream."

"Oh, I couldn't touch it, Mr. Whitaker—indeed I couldn't! I—I am so nervous and frightened!"

"I'll order the cream, anyway, and you can make a bluff at eating it. My object is to give you a chance to recover yourself, and we can't sit here without ordering something. Whether we eat what we pay for is a matter of no importance to the proprietor."

Here a waiter came up and Fred gave the order.

"Now I'll have to ask you to excuse me for a minute, or till I go back and get my friend. Try and brace up. Remember that you are now under the protection of my friend and myself. We will see that you get home all right, and that no further trouble comes to you."

"You are so good to me, Mr. Whitaker. What should I have done but for you?" replied Ruby, looking at him with tears of gratitude in her beautiful eyes.

"That's all right. I have only done my duty in helping you. Any real man or boy would do his best to help a good girl like yourself out of her difficulties."

Begging her once more to brace up, he went outside and looked around for Dick. He saw his friend standing in the middle of the street looking in every direction for some sign of his chum and the girl he had befriended. He also saw Miss Reece and her "uncle" talking together on the edge of the sidewalk a few doors from the show where the trouble occurred. The girl was excited, while the man looked angry and sullen.

"Hi, Dick!" shouted Fred.

His chum heard his call, and turning in the direction it came, saw him.

"Go to that ice-cream saloon and wait for me. You'll find Miss Ray there. Do your best to

cheer her up, and assure her we'll look out for her," said Fred when Dick came up.

"Where are you going, old man?"

"To see the man who was robbed and return him his wallet."

"There he is, coming this way," said Dick.

Fred saw him, and told his friend to run along, that he'd be back presently. He stopped the well-to-do man.

"I beg your pardon, sir; I believe you were robbed of a pocketbook in that vaudeville show back yonder," he said.

"I was, and I'm going to report the matter to police headquarters," replied the gentleman. "Were you in there at the time?"

"I was, and I saw the man you accused take your wallet."

"You did! Then why didn't you come forward and state the facts? He was searched, but my pocketbook was not found on him," said the man in an angry tone.

"I had my reasons for not doing it. The man passed the wallet to one of his female companions, and she put it into the lap of an innocent girl beside her. Had I come forward and made the accusation the wallet would have been found on the innocent girl and she would have been arrested with the others."

"Why, your statement would have cleared her."

"I doubt it. The man and his accomplice would have asserted that she was guilty, as guilty as themselves, and my word wouldn't have been enough to clear her."

"That's all right; but your confounded philanthropy has lost me my wallet."

"No, it hasn't. I followed the girl and the man's accomplice outside. They intended to get the wallet away from the girl at the first opportunity. Well, I put a spoke in their wheel. I got the pocketbook from the innocent girl myself, and she nearly had a fit when she learned she had it. Here it is. You'll find it all right, I guess. It won't be necessary for you to go to the police now."

The man opened his wallet, and found a roll of bills inside. That satisfied him he hadn't lost anything.

"I'm much obliged to you, young man. What is your name?"

"My name is Fred Whitaker. Here is my business card."

"What! Are you a broker?"

"I'm trying to be. I've just started out."

"I'm a broker on the Curb myself. My name is Prescott, and my office is at No. — Broad Street. Call and see me sometime."

"Thank you, I will; and then I'll tell you the whole story of the part the innocent girl played in the robbery of your wallet. You'll then agree that I did the right thing to protect her, even at the risk of the loss of your property."

"All right, Whitaker. I'll take your word for it, and I'm pleased to have met you. Come, let's have a drink." And the broker grabbed Fred by the arm.

"Thank you, you'll have to excuse me. I do not drink."

"No? You'll have a smoke, won't you?"

"No, sir; I don't smoke, either."

"Well, I'm sorry you won't join me. Which way are you going?"

"I'm going to rejoin my companion, who is with the girl I mentioned."

"Oh, then, she's a friend of yours? In that case you did quite right to act as you did. I'll leave you, then, and expect to see you at my office soon."

With that they separated. As the broker walked away, Miss Reece's uncle, whom she had referred to by the name of Notte, stepped up to him and grabbed him by the arm. His face was dark, and a menacing light shot from his eyes.

"A word with you, young fellow," he said, dragging Fred into the middle of the street. "You know me, I guess, an you'll know me better before I've done with you. You queered our game after it had worked out almost to a finish. You got possession of the wallet, and I've just seen you return it to its owner. Well, you're going to regret the part you took in this matter. I've got you spotted, and when you least expect it I'm going to get back at you. Remember that. You made the mistake of your life in butting into my affairs. You've made me your enemy, and you'll find that's the worst thing you could have done. That's all I've got to say to you now. You can go."

He released his grip on Fred and disappeared into the crowd. The boy looked after him.

"So you're going to get back at me, Mr. Notte?" he said to himself. "You are welcome to try it. Don't forget you're a crook, which gives me the advantage of you. You are evidently a bad man to deal with, but I'm not afraid of you for all that."

Fred then returned to the ice-cream saloon and found Dick eating his share and Ruby making a brave attempt to eat a little of hers, while her eyes wandered continually to the door in expectation of her defender's return. She brightened up the moment Fred appeared, and the grateful look came into her starry eyes again. Fred sat down and ordered another plate of cream.

"I've returned the pocketbook to its owner," he said. "His name is Prescott, and he's a Broad Street Curb broker."

"You don't say!" replied Dick. "How singular!"

"Well, are you feeling better, Miss Ray?"

"Yes, much better. You are both very nice to me. I don't know how I shall ever be able to thank you enough for your kindness in saving me from the trouble that occurred at that hall. I really didn't want to go in there, but Elise would have me do it. Oh, how disappointed I am in her! I thought her such a nice girl, and my friend, too. And to think she would help her uncle to rob a man in such a public place! It is dreadful! I don't know how I can ever look at her again."

"You want to drop her, Miss Ray. She isn't a fit associate for you," said Fred.

"But I work in the same room with her."

"That doesn't make it necessary for you to have anything to do with her."

"I wish I could get another place to work."

"It wouldn't be a bad idea for you to make a change. Look up the advertisements in the daily paper, and when you answer anything suitable, give me as your reference. State that I am a Wall Street broker, and give my address. It ought to help you."

"Thank you. You are very kind to allow me the privilege."

"Nonsense! I'll do anything I can to help you along. I want you to understand that I'm your friend—that is, if you'll accept me as such."

"I shall be glad to have you for a friend, for you are a true gentleman, and I really haven't any real friends. After the way Elise has treated me I almost distrust the girls I know. The world is so deceitful that you can hardly tell who you may rely on."

"Well, you can rely on me for one, at any rate; and on my friend Dick here, for another. He's a good fellow, and would scorn to do a mean action."

"Thanks, Fred, for the reputation you're giving me," smiled Dick. "I hope I deserve it."

"Don't you worry about that. I've always found you right. If you had any real bad traits I'd have discovered them by this time. Well, if you people are ready to go I am."

Fred paid for the cream and they walked outside.

"Do you wish us to take you home at once, Miss Ray, or are you willing to take in one of the parks with us before we go? It's just as you say," said Fred when they stood outside.

"I don't wish to spoil your pleasure, Mr. Whitaker, and that of your friend. I think I could go home alone by the next boat."

"No," replied the little operator, "it wouldn't be the right thing for you to return to the city by yourself at this hour. It is nearly nine. We'll take the next boat and see that you get home all right."

That being settled, they walked down to the steamboat landing and were in time to catch the next boat for the city. An hour later they landed at Pier No. 1 on the North River, which was the nearest landing to the girl's home, though some distance from it. They took a Second Avenue elevated train as far as Rivington Street Station, on the East Side, and from there it was only a short walk to where Ruby lived. They bade her good-night at her door, and departed with her grateful thanks ringing in their ears. Fred, in particular, carried away with him the recollection of a look from her beautiful eyes that spoke volumes, and he didn't forget it very soon.

CHAPTER V.—Fred Gets In On O. & L.

Of course Fred told his mother and sister at breakfast next morning about the adventure he and Dick had had at the summer resort down the bay. They were much interested in the pretty working girl the boys, particularly Fred, had befriended, and they thought she had been treated shamefully by her pretended friend. Fred said he intended to interest himself in getting her another job. In fact, he said, he thought of hiring her to act as his office assistant, and attend to callers when he was out, as he had no office boy. She didn't make over six or seven dollars a week at the box factory when the business was brisk, and only half that at the present time, when it was slow, and he could easily afford to pay her the former wages right along.

"I made the proposition to her," he said, "and

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she told me she'd let me know after telling her mother about the offer. I think she'd be foolish to turn it down, for she'd have a far easier time of it than in the box factory. In fact, the position would be a regular sinecure, for I haven't anything in particular for her to do except sit in the office between nine and three. It will be worth her wages to have some one there, for it doesn't look like business to have one's office shut up during business hours."

Next morning Fred entered his office a little after nine o'clock. On the floor inside the door lay a couple of letters and two or three papers left by the mail carrier on his first round. One of the papers was the daily market report. The letters were from people out of town who had seen his advertisement in a daily afternoon paper that made a specialty of Wall Street news. After answering the letters he took up the "Daily Indicator" and began reading the Wall Street news. While he was thus engaged there came a gentle knock on the door.

"Come in," said Fred, and the door opened and admitted Ruby Ray.

"Good morning, Miss Ray," said Fred, jumping up and shaking hands with her. "Take that chair," and he pointed to the one next his desk.

"I told mother about your kind offer of employment in your office, and she thought I had better accept it. Of course I'm not accustomed to office work, but I will try and make myself as useful as I can, and I am willing to do anything you want me to do."

"All right, Miss Ray, consider yourself engaged. As I have only just started in business you won't find much to do at first. Your principal duty will be to attend to callers, and I don't look for many of them yet awhile. As I need somebody in the office, why, I think the position will just suit you."

"I am sure I shall like it very much, though I'm afraid my clothes might not be nice enough for such a fine office as this."

"Don't worry about your clothes; they look all right. They suit me, and I suppose I'm the one to be pleased."

"Thank you for the assurance," she said with a smile. "I am very happy not to have to return to the box factory and meet Elise Reece again. It would embarrass me very much to have anything further to do with her after what happened on Saturday."

"You are rid of her for good now. She doesn't live near you, does she?"

"No. She lives uptown somewhere."

"Well, take off your hat and hang it in the closet, and then sit in that chair by the window. Here is a late novel which I brought down expecting you would take the position I offered you. When I am out you had better sit at my desk for a change."

Fred went on reading the news, and in about half an hour he was ready to go out. He gave Ruby some instructions as to what she should say to visitors, and then he started for the Exchange. At the corner of Broad and Wall streets two well-dressed men were standing talking together when Fred came along and stopped for a slow-going automobile to pass.

"Have you any O. & L. shares at your office, Bacon?" Fred heard one say.

"No. Do you want any?"

"I do. I want all I can get."

"Give me your order and I'll fill it. How much are you paying for it? The market or above?"

"It's going at 79 now. I'll give you a leeway of two points, but I expect you to get it as low as you can."

"Of course. I'll offer a quarter of a point above the market and see what that'll fetch out. The stock, I understand, is advancing, so I may have to give at least a point above the current price."

"Well, don't go over two points without communicating with me. I expect to make a good thing out of it, for I look to see it touch par in a week."

That was all Fred heard, but it set him to thinking.

He knew O. & L. was a gilt-edge stock, and he guessed that the man who gave Broker Bacon the order had a tip on an anticipated rise.

Instead of going to the Exchange, he went up to the little banking and brokerage house on Nassau Street, where he had put through his various deals when he was a messenger, and took a seat in the reception room facing a big blackboard that extended across the back of the room.

Here he sat and watched a boy chalk up the quotations as they came from the Exchange.

In the course of an hour he saw transactions quoted in O. & L.

Every one of them showed a rising price.

"I guess I'll get in on this thing. It looks like a winner."

So he left the bank and went to the safe deposit vault where he rented a box, and taking out \$2,000 of his \$2,500 capital, he returned to the little bank and put in an order for 200 shares of O. & L. at the market, then 81. That done, he sat down again and watched the blackboard until it was lunch time.

After getting a light lunch he returned to his office.

"Had any visitors, Miss Ray?" he asked.

"A broker named Prescott was in here to see you shortly after you went out," she replied. "He said he might call again after three."

"Did you recognize him?"

"In what way?" asked Ruby in some surprise.

"Why, he was the gentleman who was robbed of his wallet by the man Miss Reece called her uncle."

"Is it possible!" she exclaimed. "His face did look a bit familiar to me."

"Yes, I found out who he was when I returned him his property, while you were in the ice cream parlor with my friend Dick."

Fred then asked her if she wasn't hungry.

"Mother gave me ten cents to buy some lunch," she said with a smile; "but I hardly know where to go around here."

"There are lots of lunch houses where girls go. I would suggest that you go to McDuff's, on Broadway, near Wall Street. Better take a quarter with you. Ten cents is hardly enough," and he offered her the money.

"Thank you. You will, of course, deduct it from my wages," she said, putting on her hat.

"It is a small matter, hardly worth while," he replied.

He remained in the office till Ruby returned, and then went over to the Exchange, where he stayed till it closed at three.

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At half-past three he was back in his office again.

"You can go home now, Miss Ray," he said.

"So early?" she said in surprise.

"It isn't necessary for you to remain any longer, as I shall stay here for perhaps half an hour, and then go home myself. Your office hours will be from nine till about this time. If I need you to stay longer I shall ask you to stay."

"Why, I worked from eight till half-past five, and some times later, in the box factory, she said.

"I have no doubt you did, but the hours are different in Wall Street."

"Mother will be surprised to see me home so soon."

"She'll get used to that."

"She'll be delighted to know I have got such a nice position."

"I shall make it as pleasant as possible for you."

"I don't know how to thank you for your generosity to me, Mr. Whitaker."

"Then don't try to do it. It isn't necessary."

Soon after she left Mr. Prescott came in.

"You've got quite a nice little den here, Whitaker," he said, taking a seat.

"Yes, it isn't bad for a chap just starting out for himself."

"I should say not. How long have you been in business?"

"This is my fourth week."

"Doing anything?"

"Nothing to speak of. I'm in on a deal that I hope will pan me out a few thousand."

"If you can make two or three thousands this month you'll be doing uncommonly well, for most of the brokers aren't making their salt."

Broker Prescott said he came in to hear further particular about the young lady whom Fred saved from being mixed up in the robbery of his wallet.

"You've seen her. What do you think of her?" said Fred.

"Oh, I didn't notice her in the crowd," replied Prescott.

"I don't mean at the island, but here, in my office."

"I don't quite catch on."

"You called here this morning, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"And you saw a young lady here?"

"I did."

"That was the young lady I refer to. She's my office assistant."

"The dickens you say! She's a mighty pretty girl. Has the loveliest eyes I think I ever saw. So she is the girl?"

"She is."

"She's an ornament to your office. Rather dangerous, I should imagine, though."

"In what way?"

"Those eyes are likely to work serious havoc in a susceptible young fellow like you. I sha'n't be surprised to hear of your marrying her one of these days."

"I might do worse, for she's as good as she's pretty."

"You seem to know her pretty well. I'm afraid the damage has been done," laughed Prescott. "By the way, are you doing anything in mining stocks?"

"No."

"Well, as you did me a good turn Saturday, I would like to reciprocate. If you will take a tip from me you'll buy all the Ivanhoe Copper you can afford to carry. Before the month is out there will be developments in that quarter that will more than double the value of the shares."

"Thanks for the pointer, but I'm in heavily on O. & L., and can't touch anything else for the present."

"O. & L. is good. It's going up, and you ought to make something out of it. However, bear Ivanhoe Copper in mind. It's going at \$4.24 now, and will soon reach \$5. If you're in a position to buy it at that do so, and you'll double your money. Well, I must go now. Drop in and see me when you can. I'll be glad to see you any time."

As Broker Prescott walked out Dick Markham walked in.

"Say, Fred, who do you suppose I saw hanging around your door just now?"

"As I'm not a mind reader I'll give it up," replied the little operator.

"Miss Reece's uncle, whose name is Notte, I believe."

"You don't say! He's evidently on my trail. I'll have to put the Wall Street detectives on to him. He told me he was going to get square with me."

"So you told me. He's a bad egg. Looks like a chap who would be apt to try and pay back a grudge if he got any chance at all. Better keep your wits about you, old man, if you go any place around town where he might be able to get at you. You can't tell but he may get a pal to follow you. He will probably find out where you live, and he and two or three others may watch for some night when you're out late and try to do you up."

"I'll look out for him. Are you ready to go home? I am."

Dick was ready, so Fred locked up and the boys went home together.

CHAPTER VI.—The White-Headed Old Man.

A week passed, and O. & L. went steadily up, day by day, till it reached 98 when Fred concluded to sell out, as he thought it wouldn't go much higher, anyway, and also because he wanted to use the money in Ivanhoe Copper, now selling at \$5.

His profit on O. & L. amounted to about \$3,400.

As soon as the bank settled with him he bought 1,000 shares of Ivanhoe Copper outright, paying \$5,000 for it.

Prescott bought it for him and charged him half the commission.

About this time it began to get around the Street that there was a boy broker in the Crescent Building, and that he had an uncommonly handsome office assistant.

Prescott may have set the ball rolling, for he certainly told some of his trader friends about how Fred had recovered his wallet, containing \$600, for him, and also spoke about the boy being a new broker, and what a pretty girl he had in his office.

Several of the brokers felt curious to see the boy trader, but more curious to get a sight of the girl.

This was particularly the case with an old bald-

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headed operator, who had a weakness for the fair sex.

He located Fred's office and walked in one morning while the boy was hanging around the Curb market keeping tab of Ivanhoe Copper, which had gone up to \$5.50.

As soon as his eyes rested on Ruby he decided she was a stunning girl.

He asked for Fred, and being told that the little operator was down at the Curb, he sat down and started in talking with Ruby.

After answering his questions for a while she began to wish he'd go, but he showed no intention of doing so.

As she had been reading a book she could not set up the excuse that she was busy, so he didn't know how to get rid of him.

He told her that his name was Stephen Hooper, that he was a widower, was worth half a million dollars, and was looking around for a new wife to soothe his declining years and inherit his money.

Ruby was feeling quite embarrassed as he grew more and more pointed in his conversation, and never took his admiring eyes off of her.

Suddenly the door opened and Dick stuck his head in.

"Fred isn't in, is he?"

"No," she replied, jumping up and rushing to the door. "I want to see you a moment, Mr. Markham, outside."

"All right; I'm at your service," said Dick.

"You saw that man in there?" she said, as she pulled the door to after her.

"Sure thing," replied Dick. "I know him, too. He's old Hooper, the ladies' man of the Street. What does he want?"

"He came in and asked for Mr. Whitaker. When I told him he was out and not likely to return for an hour, he sat down and started to talk with me. He doesn't seem to want to go away. Isn't there some way I can get him out?"

Dick scratched his head and considered.

"Where is Fred?"

"He's down at the Curb market."

"Well, the only way I see is for you to tell him that you're going on business. Then put on your hat. That ought to be a plain hint for him to go. You can lock up, go around to the Pine Street entrance and regain the office by the back way. It won't take you long to do that."

"I'll do it," she said.

Accordingly Ruby went back and told Hooper that she was going out on business, and that she was about to lock up.

The old chap seemed disappointed, but he put on his hat, said he'd call again when Mr. Whitaker was likely to be in, and departed.

Ruby put on her hat and went as far as the elevator, and, not seeing Hooper, concluded that it wasn't necessary for her to go out, so she went back to the office.

As she came in sight of the door she saw an old white-haired man stooping down and looking through the keyhole.

On hearing her footsteps he jumped up with remarkable agility for such an old-looking chap and went hobbling away down the corridor, thumping his stick on the marble tiles.

She looked after him, wondering what his object could be in looking through the keyhole.

Unlocking the door, she entered, took off her hat, and sat down at the desk and took up her book again.

Ten minutes later she thought she heard some one at the door.

She called out "Come in," but nobody entered.

Five minutes afterward she heard the same sound again.

Putting down her book, she walked to the door and threw it open. She caught the white-haired man in the act of looking through the keyhole again. He jumped up and started to leave, when she ran after him and caught his arm.

"What do you want?" she asked.

"Eh?" asked the man, putting his hand to his ear, as if very deaf.

"Why were you looking through the keyhole of that door. This is the second time I've seen you in the act, and I want you to explain why you did it."

"Eh?" replied the man once more.

At that moment Fred came toward the office. Ruby motioned him to come over. He did so.

"What's the matter?" he asked, looking at the white-haired man curiously.

Ruby explained how she had caught the old man twice looking through the keyhole of the office door, and when she asked him why he did not appear to understand what she said, being seemingly deaf. While she was telling the facts of the case to Fred the old man made no further attempt to get away, but with one hand in his coat, stood bent over. The little operator, however, observed that the fellow was watching him covertly, and his attitude looked like that of a person about to spring. This fact put Fred on his guard, and he did not take his eyes from him.

"Look here, old man, what game are you up to?" demanded the boy.

"Eh?" replied the intruder.

"Are you deaf?"

"Eh?" he said again.

"He did not seem to be very deaf a while ago, for he heard my footsteps coming along the corridor from the elevator and he hurried away pretty quick for such an old man," said Ruby.

The girl's words further increased Fred's suspicions. It struck him that this old fellow was not exactly what he seemed to be. It also occurred to him that this might be some spy of Miss Reece's Uncle Notte in disguise. He looked more narrowly at the old man. He was almost certain that the long white beard was false, and the white hair a wig. He determined to test the matter. Stepping up to him, he suddenly grabbed his beard and gave it a pull. Ruby uttered a cry of surprise as she saw the hair come away in Fred's hand. At the same moment the seeming old man uttered a hissing imprecation, drew a glittering knife from his bosom, and sprang at the little operator. Fred, half expecting some aggressive move on his part, was not taken unawares. At the same time he shot out his right fist and landed a heavy blow under the rascal's left ear that sent him staggering to the floor. Quick as a wink Fred was after him and kicked the knife out of his hand. As the man, with a string of invectives, essayed to get on his feet, Fred smashed him again in the face, laying him out. Jumping on him, the little operator tore the broad-brimmed hat from his head, and the white

wig came with it. Then the fellow lay revealed fully before Fred. It was Notte himself.

CHAPTER VII.—Fred's Veiled Visitor.

"Ring up the superintendent of the building on the phone, Miss Ray," said Fred, "and tell him to come up here with the janitor as soon as he can. You can explain that I've captured a crook."

Ruby, who had been greatly frightened when she saw her employer menaced with a knife, hastened to obey.

"Now I've got you, Mr. Notte, I'm going to land you behind the bars," said the little operator.

"You'll never land me in jail!" cried Notte, with a baleful look at the boy.

Exerting all his strength, which was considerable, he threw Fred off his chest and rolled over on top.

"It's a good thing for you that my knife is out of reach, or I'd finish you, you young hound; but I'll reach you yet, and when I do, you'll be a candidate for an undertaker."

As he spoke he struck Fred a stunning blow in the face, leaped off him and made a dash for the back stairway that led out on Pine Street, and vanished before the boy recovered sufficiently to follow him. Fred, however, did not intend to lose him if he could help it.

He rushed for an elevator, caught a descending cage, and when he reached the ground floor he rushed through the main corridor to the Pine Street entrance. He looked up and down the street, but could see nothing of Notte.

"He's gone into one of the near-by buildings to hide himself," thought the boy, much disappointed.

He remained several minutes on the watch, thinking the rascal might show himself. As he did not, he returned to his office, where he found the superintendent and the janitor listening to Ruby's explanation.

"The scoundrel got away from me. He was stronger than I thought. There is the knife he tried to stab me with," said Fred.

"He must have learned that you only had a girl in your office, and he probably meant to try to rob you," said the superintendent.

"No, that wasn't his object. He was looking for me. He owes me a grudge, and I suspect he intended to lay me out with that knife."

Fred then explained enough of the particulars of Saturday's incident at the island to account for Notte's actions.

"He is evidently a vicious rascal, and it's a pity he managed to make his escape. You will have to look out sharp for him, for he may lay for you again."

"I'll keep my eyes open, don't you fear. I have already told two or three of the Wall Street detectives about him, but the disguise he had on to-day was a pretty effective one."

"Rather," said the janitor, holding up the white beard, wig, and wide-brimmed hat.

"I'll keep that outfit and the knife as evidence until he's arrested, and then I'll use it against him with this young lady's testimony," said Fred.

After some further talk, the superintendent and the janitor went back downstairs, leaving Fred and Ruby by themselves.

"I'm afraid I've been the cause of bringing a

great deal of trouble on you, Mr. Whitaker," said the girl, with a look of distress in her face. "I'm so sorry."

"Don't worry about that, Miss Ray. It isn't your fault."

"But I'm the cause of it. If that man should injure you I shall never be able to forgive myself," and the tears came into her eyes.

"There! Don't think about it any more," said the little operator.

"But I shall worry over it. I don't want anything to happen to you."

"Oh, nothing will happen to me," he replied lightly. "I shall be on my guard against the rascal, and the next time I meet him I may be able to land him in jail."

Ruby, however, looked nervous and worried.

"Come now, brace up, little girl," continued Fred. "I don't want to see you downhearted."

"You've been so good to me that—that—"

She hid her face in her hands and began to sob.

"Why, I only did the right thing when I interfered to save you from the undesirable companionship of Miss Reece and Notte. I didn't like his face the moment I rested my eyes on it, but still I was not prepared to find that he was a regular crook. Some men, who are really very decent chaps, are provided with hard-looking faces, and I supposed he came under that head, seeing him with you and Miss Reece. I was staggered when I saw him pinch the wallet in a way that showed he was a professional. Then when Miss Reece took it and hid it in your lap, that was a greater shock still. I realized at once that you were in mighty bad company, and I believed it to be my duty to save you."

"And you did."

"Yes. And I'd do it again, if the necessity called for it, no matter what the risk. I liked you the moment I saw you, and the way you acted when we were introduced in that off-hand way assured me that you were as good and innocent as you were sweet looking. I mean to be your friend always if you will let me, and when you come to know me better you will find that you can trust me in every way."

"I'm sure I can," she replied, looking at him in a confiding way.

"Well, I'll tell you what brought me back. I met Dick Markham on the street and he said he was up here, and that Broker Hooper had called, and finding me out, was annoying you with his conversation. He said he told you to get rid of the visitor by giving him to understand that you were going out on business, and suggested that you walk around the block and come in by the Pine Street entrance. I thought that was a first-class plan for you to adopt, but for fear it might fail, for I know what Hooper is, I came up to help you out of your predicament if it was necessary. I see you did get rid of him, though."

"Yes. He got out, but he went very reluctantly."

"I guess so. The trouble with Hooper is he gets stuck on every pretty girl he runs across. He's an old fool and ought to know better. He's got money, and some day he'll get taken in and done for by some woman like your late friend Miss Reece. She'll marry him for his money and then worry him into his grave."

Fred stayed a while in the office, and then went out again, after telling Ruby not to wait for him

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to come back when lunch time came around, but to look up and go out. That afternoon Ivanhoe Copper went up to \$6.

Dick dropped in after three o'clock and found Fred at his desk and Ruby preparing to go home.

"Too bad you weren't around here this morning when I came up to see if Hooper had gone away," said Fred.

"Why? Anything happen?"

"I should say so. A whole lot happened."

"Let's hear about it," said Dick in a tone of interest.

Fred told him about the white-bearded man, and how he had turned out to be the rascal Notte.

"Gee! You had a narrow escape. That fellow is trying hard to be revenged on you. Have you notified the police?"

"I have."

"That's right. Maybe they'll catch him. If he's a known crook the detectives ought to be able to land him sooner or later."

"I hope so. I don't like the idea of having such a chap as that camping out on my trail."

"I should say not. Looks serious when he has taken a knife to you."

"If he'd had a revolver instead of a knife he might have done me."

"A gun makes too much noise, that's why he thought a knife easier. Well, how's business?"

"Nothing doing; but I expect to make a haul out of Ivanhoe Copper in a little while. It's gone up from \$2 to \$6 in two weeks."

"How much have you got?"

"A thousand shares. I paid \$5 for it."

"How high are you looking for it to go?"

"I expect it will reach \$10."

"Well, I wish you luck. Sorry I'm not in on some such deal. When are you going uptown?"

"Not for half an hour yet."

"Then I'll get along. So long," and Dick walked out.

Three-quarters of an hour afterward, as Fred was preparing to shut up, there came a knock on the door.

"Come in," said the little operator.

A young lady, heavily veiled, came in.

"You are Mr. Whitaker, I believe?" she said.

"That's my name. Take a seat, madam, and let me know what I can do for you."

"You buy railroad stock, don't you?"

"Have you some for sale?"

"I have."

"What is the road?"

"The B. & A."

"That's a gilt-edged stock, ma'am."

Fred took up the day's market report and looked up B. & A.

"It's ruling at 125. How many shares have you for sale?"

"One certificate of 100."

"I can easily sell it for you. My commission will be \$12.50."

"Can't you buy it yourself? I want to leave town this evening."

"No ma'am. It isn't convenient for me to take it off your hands. The best I can do is take it and sell it for you."

The visitor did not say anything for a moment or two, then she said:

"Can you loan me \$5,000 on the certificate and hold the balance till I come back in a week?"

"No ma'am. I'm not loaning money on stock at present."

"Then I'm afraid I can't——"

"I beg your pardon, madam, but will you kindly tell me your name?"

"My name? Oh, my name is—is Brown, Mrs. Brown," she said in a hesitating way.

"Do you mind raising your veil?"

"Sir!"

"I should like to see your face. I think I have met you before."

"How dare you? I've never met you before in my life," she snapped.

"I may be mistaken, but I think not. Oblige me by unmasking," said the little operator suavely.

"Unmasking, indeed! I'd like to see myself raising my veil to you."

"I think you will," replied Fred coolly, stepping between his visitor and the door. "Lift your veil, or I'll lock the door and telephone for a policeman."

"Why, what do you mean?" she gasped, rising to her feet.

"Exactly what I said. I have recognized you, miss; but, to make sure, I want to see your face. If you are the person I think you are, I have a strong suspicion that you either have no certificate of stock, or, if you have, it is a stolen one."

"You wretch! Take that!"

Quick as a flash she raised her hand, which held a wide-mouthed bottle. But, quick as she was, Fred was quicker. He sprang at her, wrenched the bottle from her fingers, and threw it into a corner. Holding her firmly in his grasp, he tore off her veil. His suspicions were fully verified. His visitor was Elise Reece.

CHAPTER VIII.—Nathan Notte Keeps His Word.

The desperate girl struggled and kicked like a wild cat, but the little operator held her with a grip of steel.

"I was sure it was you, young lady, for I have an excellent memory for voices. Then your figure and walk also helped to betray your identity. I didn't intend to detain you, but your attempt to blind me with acid changes the case. When you leave this office you will go in the custody of an officer, and I shall prosecute you to the limit of the law. Your Uncle Notte, if he is your uncle, made a mistake when he sent you around to do what he failed to accomplish himself. Elise glared in fury into Fred's face. She saw by his manner that he was in earnest, and knowing she had put her foot into it, she fought with all her might to get away. But she hadn't the ghost of a show with the athletic boy. Finally she let out a piercing scream that rang through the corridor, and fainted. Fred threw her back on the chair and grabbed his telephone. He asked to be connected with the nearest police station. While waiting for communication to be established there were sounds of excitement in the corridor. The girl's screams had aroused the clerks in all the neighboring offices and they came running out to see what was the matter. There was no woman in distress in the corridor, and they began to won-

der what office the scream had issued from. One of them finally opened Fred's door and look in. He saw the senseless Elise on the chair and Fred at the telephone.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"Nothing much," replied the young operator. "My visitor has fainted, that's all."

At that moment a voice over the wire asked what was wanted.

"Is this the Oak Street Station?" asked Fred.

"Yes."

"I am Fred Whitaker, broker, Room 803, Crescent Building, Wall Street."

"Well?"

"Send an officer here at once to take charge of a young woman who came to my office and made an attempt to disfigure me with acid. Her name is Elise Reece, and she's the accomplice of a crook named Notte, who is wanted for a murderous attack made on me this morning in this building, the particulars of which have been telephoned to headquarters."

"I'll send an officer at once," replied the voice.

The clerk standing at the door heard what Fred said into the 'phone, and he stared both at the little operator and the unconscious girl. He had not heard about the attack on Fred that morning, nor, in fact, anyone in the building, except some of the attaches to whom the circumstance had been communicated by the superintendent and the janitor. He withdrew to tell those outside the startling news, and he soon had a crowd of curious and excited employees around him. Prior to the arrival of the officer, Fred took the liberty of searching Elise's pocket for a possible certificate of B. & A. stock. He found she had one for 100 shares. He made a note of its number and the name to whom it was made out to.

"It looks as if her object was to either sell me that certificate, which I have no doubt is a stolen one, or get me to loan her money on it. While I was getting the money from the safe doubtless she intended to blind me and get away with money and certificate, too. She's a bad one; but I'll pickle her. If this certificate is a stolen one, so much the worse for her, unless she turns State's evidence against the man who gave it to her, and who doubtless is Notte. He put her up to this game, but it has failed as badly as his own little scheme."

Soon after the policeman arrived, and after a brief talk with the little operator, took the senseless girl downstairs to a waiting patrol wagon, Fred promising to follow to the station and make the charge. This he did at once, and found that the girl had been revived by the matron of the station. When brought up to the desk and charged with the assault on Fred, her nerve deserted her, and she broke down. She declared that she did not know what she was doing. Fred produced the bottle with a portion of the acid still in it, and handed it to the officer at the desk. When told that she would be locked up and then taken to the Tombs, she became hysterical and begged Fred to intercede for her.

"I can't do anything for you now," he said, "and I don't see how you can expect me to, after what you have been guilty of. If you are willing to give information that will lead to the arrest of the man you call your uncle, it is possible I may withdraw the charge against you. Otherwise you'll have to take the consequences of your folly."

"I can't tell anything. Nathan Notte would kill

me, and he'll kill you if you prosecute me," she flashed, thinking her words might have some effect.

"I'll risk it," replied Fred. "He tried it to-day, and failed."

"But he won't fail next time," she said, with a vengeful look.

"Take her away," said the officer at the desk, and she was carried off screaming. "She'll be brought before a magistrate in the morning," added the man, turning to the boy. "You want to be at the Tombs Police Court about ten to press the charge."

"I'll be there," replied Fred, and then left the station and went home.

He reached his office early next morning, and had just time to tell Ruby about the visit he had had from her late friend, how she had attacked him with a bottle of acid, and how he had had her arrested, when it was time for him to go to court. Ruby was greatly startled to learn what a reckless, wicked girl Miss Reece had turned out to be, and she was more than ever concerned about Fred's safety. To tell the truth, she had already lost her heart to the little operator, though she wouldn't have confessed the fact, even to her mother, for the world. It was a secret locked in her own breast, but though her lips might be mute, her eyes were likely to give her away when she least expected it. When Elise was brought before the magistrate she looked like a wreck. She had slept little, if any, and her eyes were red and swollen from weeping. She pleaded not guilty. Fred then went on the stand and told his story. Although it was not corroborated, Fred had taken the precaution to bring Mr. Prescott with him, and the broker swore she was the companion of the man Notte, who had stolen his wallet in the summer resort vaudeville show, and that told against her character, and strengthened the little operator's story. The magistrate decided to hold her, and she was remanded to the Tombs. As Fred was leaving the court a boy came up to him and handed him a note. Tearing it open he found it was from Notte, though it was unsigned.

"You have signed your death warrant by prosecuting that girl. I will do you at the first chance if I swing for it," it said. "If you think I can't reach you you'll find yourself mistaken. I'll get you even if you were hedged in by the whole detective force of the city."

"That's a cheerful communication," thought Fred, "but it doesn't intimidate me worth a cent."

He went back and showed it to the magistrate, telling him how he had received it, and who the writer was. The magistrate wrote something at the bottom of it and told Fred to take it to police headquarters. The little operator did so at once, and the head of the detective bureau said he would send a couple of men out to hunt the rascal up. He was shown the portraits in the Rogues' Gallery to see if Notte's picture was in it, but Fred did not find any photo that he could say positively was Notte. He furnished the two detectives with a description of the scoundrel, and told how clever he was at disguising himself, then he went back to his office.

Dick was astonished when he read about the attack on Fred by Miss Reece in the morning paper, and further particulars in the afternoon editions. He considered his friend's position more serious than ever. He dropped into Fred's office

at the first chance he got, but the little operator was out. He had a short talk with Ruby on the subject, and she expressed great concern for the safety of her employer. After getting off for the day, he came around to the office again, and found Fred talking with several brokers who had come up to see him. He got no chance to talk to Fred until they started home together; and then, after hearing his friend's story from his own lips he advised him to get a revolver and carry it.

"I've got one, old man, and I shall carry it at night, but I guess I don't need it downtown," he said.

"Well, if I were you I'd get another and keep it in my office desk. You can't tell what might happen when you've got such a man as Notte after you. It doesn't pay to take any chances at all."

Fred said he'd think about it, and then changed the conversation. Next day he learned that the 100-share B. & A. certificate he had found on Elise Reece had been stolen, with a lot of other valuables, from the home of a gentleman on Madison Avenue. He then turned it over to the police, with a statement of how he came by it. Two weeks passed, and nothing happened. Miss Reece remained in prison in default of \$1,000 bail, but though a detective visited her twice, at Fred's suggestion, to try and get some information about Notte out of her, she wouldn't open her lips.

Ivanhoe Copper reached \$11 after a boom caused by official news of the discovery of a rich body of ore, and Broker Prescott sent word to Fred that it was time to sell out, as the price was likely to drop back \$2 or \$3 as soon as the temporary excitement was over. Fred told him to sell, and the boy's stock brought \$11.25 a share, netting him a profit of \$5,000, which raised his capital to something under \$12,000.

A few days afterward he learned that a syndicate of wealthy brokers were trying to corner M. & R., a stock that was ruling low in the market for various reasons. He lost no time in buying 1,000 shares of it at the little bank at the prevailing price of 68, feeling satisfied that he had another winner on deck. On the day that he made the purchase he received a note, on the letter-heading of a large furniture store uptown, which stated that the writer, who was a salesman in the employ of the house, had seen his advertisement in the "Evening P—," and would call on him that day between four and five, for the purpose of investing the proceeds of a legacy in some good stock that he could recommend. He showed the note to Ruby, and told her he was beginning to get customers. She congratulated him, but a moment later her womanly intuition suggested that this might be some trick on the part of Fred's enemy to catch him in a trap.

She told him her fears, but he laughed and said he guessed there wasn't any danger of Notte venturing down to Wall Street again.

"You can't tell what that man might not do. I had a dream about you last night that I didn't like. Do please be careful," she begged earnestly.

"Would you really feel bad if something happened to me, Miss—Ruby?"

"I would feel dreadful," she replied.

"Thank you for the interest you take in me. I assure you I take the same in you. To make certain it's all right, I'll telephone the furniture

house and see if such a person as the writer of the note is employed there."

"It would be a good plan," she said.

So Fred telephoned and learned that a salesman by that name did work for the establishment. That satisfied him that the note was genuine, and it quieted Ruby's apprehensions somewhat, but not altogether, on account of her dream. She didn't go home till four that day, and on her way she met Dick, who had been sent to Brooklyn by his boss, and she told him about the letter Fred had received, and how, notwithstanding it appeared to be all right, she had her fears.

"Well, after I report to my boss, who is waiting for me at the office, I'll run in and see Fred. I usually go home with him, anyhow, you know."

Reassured by the promise of Dick to call at Fred's office, Ruby went home in better spirits.

At half-past four Fred, who was waiting for his new customer, heard a knock on the door.

"Come in," he said.

A smooth-faced young man of thirty entered with a large handbag.

"Mr. Whitaker?" he said inquiringly.

"Yes. That's my name. You are—"

"George Hunt. You got my note, I believe," he with a large handbag.

"I did. Glad to know you, Mr. Hunt. You wish to—"

"What's that?" asked the visitor, pointing at the window.

Fred turned to look. The next instant the man who had given his name as Hunt grabbed him from behind, tripped him up, and threw him on the floor. With one hand on the surprised boy's mouth and his weight on his chest, he gave a whistle. The door opened and two men entered, shut and locked the door in a business-like way. One was dressed in a Prince Albert coat, with a silk hat and a heavy beard. The other wore a sack coat, a derby hat, and had a smooth face.

"Help Cole," said the man with the beard, in sharp, quick tones, that sounded familiar to the struggling little operator. The speaker then opened the handbag, took some pieces of clothes-line from it and ordered his companions to place Fred in the revolving chair. As soon as they did so he bound the boy tightly to it, while Cole gagged him with a handkerchief. In a few minutes Fred was helpless.

"Now, young man, do you know me?" said the man with the silk hat, removing his beard.

Fred recognized him as Notte.

"I told you I'd reach you, and you see I have. I told you I'd kill you, and I intended to do it. But not by shedding your blood. I've selected a better way," with a short laugh.

He took a sheet of paper on which something was written and laid it in the center of Fred's desk.

"Dead boys tell no tales," said Nathan Notte, pointing at the gas fixture. "When we leave this room you'll be slowly asphyxiated. 'Tis an easy death and a sure one. The paper will show that you committed suicide."

Fred, with a thrill of horror, comprehended his purpose.

"Light the gas and see what sort of flame it gives," said Notte to the smooth-faced man.

The fellow did as he was told.

"I see. It has six-foot flow. Turn it out. So.

Now turn it on full blast, and we'll get out and leave him to his own reflections."

Notte unlocked the door, and put the key on the outside. Then he motioned his companions to go.

"Good-by, my little broker," he said. "I wish you pleasant dreams and a quick exit from this world. Remember me to Old Nick."

Thus speaking he grinned malevolently at the helpless boy, walked out, shut the door and locked it. Fred heard him remove the key, their retreating footsteps along the corridor sounded in his ear, and then—silence.

CHAPTER IX.—Saved by a Hair.

Fred clearly realized the terrible position in which he was placed. It was after five o'clock, and nearly all the clerks in the offices on that floor, as well as throughout the building, had gone home. The janitor and his assistants were cleaning up, and he felt that the only chance he had for his life was the appearance of one of the janitor's hands in that corridor within a few minutes, and the possibility that he would smell the escaping gas and investigate whence it came from.

It was a slim chance, however, and not to be depended on. The man might not be around for a good half hour, long before which time the boy knew he would be as dead as any corpse in the city morgue. In spite of his shrewdness and alertness Nathan Notte had stolen a march on him in a way he had least expected. In the battle of wits the rascal had won out.

A person placed in a desperate situation like Fred's thinks more rapidly and more clearly than at any other time of his life. Things flash across his brain that would never otherwise occur to him. Fred's eyes rested on the paper which Notte had placed in full view on his desk, and almost marveled at the ingenious device adopted by the rascal to make it appear that he had committed suicide. The next moment the utter futility of the device occurred to him.

If he intended to commit suicide how could he bind himself in the manner he was tied to the chair, and why should he do so even if the feat were possible?

"Nathan Notte is a fool, after all," he thought, "though slick enough to make sure of me."

Then his thoughts went out to his mother and sister in Harlem, and he groaned as he pictured the shock his sudden and tragic death would have on them. Next he thought of Ruby, and wondered what effect his taking off would have on her.

"I really believe she cares for me," he muttered. "I seemed to read that in her eyes this afternoon when she begged me to telephone the furniture house about the writer of the note. Dear little girl, what will become of her after she has lost my protection and the position that stands between her and her mother and want?"

The smell of gas had now grown so strong that Fred was conscious he could resist its insidious influence but a few minutes longer. Already his head was beginning to buzz and his brain to whirl. The furniture and other things in the room began to assume odd shapes, and to appear as if endowed with life and motion.

The light that came through the closed window from the airshaft appeared to be growing dimmer every moment, though this was largely an

illusion of his senses, for there was still plenty of daylight, though not as strong in the airshaft as out on the street. It was when he felt that life was slowly but surely receding from him that he suddenly heard the rattle of the knob of his door, as if some one had made an effort to enter. The sound aroused his benumbed faculties from the stupor into which he was drifting. He thought it must be the janitor coming in, and his heart gave a throb of hope. No key, however, rattled in the lock, as he expected to hear, therefore it could not be the janitor. Some one else was there. Who could it be? If he only could attract their attention. He was sitting in front of his desk, close to it, where Nathan Notte had pushed him, so he could read what was written on the paper. His legs were tied to the seat in a way that threw up his knees. Instantly he thought of the only way to make a noise and that was to throw himself backward, which would cause the body of the chair to tilt and his knees would hit the desk. He hardly heard the sound he made, but Dick, standing outside, on the point of going away, convinced that Fred had gone home, heard the double knock. He listened in some surprise, and heard some more muffled sounds. He couldn't imagine what they indicated, unless the janitor was in there tidying up; but this could hardly be with the door locked. His curiosity induced him to put his eye to the keyhole, and then he caught a strong whiff of gas.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed. "The gas is on in there. The janitor must have turned it on accidentally."

He was about to rush off to find the janitor, when there was a heavy fall in the room. Fred, in a last desperate effort to make himself heard, had thrown himself back so hard that his knees missed the edge of the desk and the chair went over with him, causing quite a crash.

"There's surely someone in there," thought Dick. "It is hardly likely any article of furniture could fall over of itself."

He applied his eye to the keyhole again, and this time he gave a start of horrified surprise. He distinctly saw the overturned chair, with Fred bound and gagged in it, lying still and motionless on the floor.

"There's been crooked work here. And the room is filling with gas, too. Fred will be suffocated. I must save him, and the quickest way is to smash the glass and let the gas out as much as possible."

He slipped off his right shoe and struck the ground-glass pane with the heel as hard as he could. The glass was splintered with a crash, and an overpowering rush of illuminating gas rolled out into his face and almost overcame him. Recovering himself, he attacked the broken pane with blow after blow, sending the glass splinters flying in every direction. The noise was heard by the janitor's assistant in the next corridor, and he came running around to find out what was the matter.

"Here, what in thunder are you doing?" he shouted, thinking a thief was trying to break into the office.

"Come here, and help me get this door open!" cried Dick. "Hurry, or we may be too late to save Fred Whitaker!"

Dick's desperate earnestness had its effect on the man, and he ran up. One glance into the

room, and the smell of the gas was enough to show him that a crime had been perpetrated in the office.

Out came his key and a moment later the door swung open.

They rushed the unconscious boy, with the chair, to the nearest open window and stuck his head out.

Leaving him in Dick's charge, the man ran back, turned off the flow of gas, and threw open the office window.

Then he seized the telephone and rang up the annunciator down on the first floor.

The head janitor answered the call, and his assistant told him to call an ambulance surgeon at once, and say that one of the tenants had been overcome with gas, and to get around as soon as the horse could bring him.

While the janitor's assistant was telephoning to his boss downstairs, Dick tore the handkerchief from Fred's mouth, cut the rope which bound him to the chair, and was doing his best to revive him.

He found he had a hard job on his hands, for his chum was nearly at his last gasp.

"Good Lord!" Dick exclaimed. "This must be that blamed rascal Notte's work. No one else would attempt such a villainous trick. He's sworn he would kill Fred at the first chance he got. How in thunder could he have managed it? He's got an awful nerve to venture into this building in broad daylight; but it seems to be the nervy people who turn the tricks."

The janitor's man now came up with a glass of water, and both of them worked over Fred, but with very little success.

"It's a pretty bad case, I'm afraid," said the man doubtfully. "I've telephoned for an ambulance, and said it was an urgent matter."

"Gee! The surgeon can't get here any too quick to save his life, I'm afraid," said Dick, in a fever of apprehension lest Fred die on their hands.

"I don't see how a crook could have got into this building and done so much under our noses," said the man. "He must have turned on the gas accidentally. It wasn't necessary for him to kill the lad after binding and gagging him. I s'pose threatened to kill Whitaker. Of that fact I feel rear entrance."

"The man who did this job is a rascal who has threatened to kill Whitaker. Of that fact I feel certain. His name is Notte, and the detectives have been looking for him sometime without success. He is evidently one of the slickest crooks in the business. If he wasn't he couldn't have worked such a game."

Fred now showed signs of reviving, and they redoubled their efforts.

At last the little operator opened his eyes and gasped for breath.

Dick fanned him with his hat.

"I guess he's come around now," said Dick, feeling much encouraged.

"Yes; and he had two men with him. I received a note from a person I expected was a customer asking me to remain till half-past four."

"So Miss Ray told me, and she was rather worried about it."

"It was a trap, as she suspected, in spite of the fact that I telephoned the house where the writer was supposed to be employed, and found that a man by the name given was employed there."

"Well, don't talk about it till you feel better. I'll stay with you and see that you get home all right. Janitor, you'd better have a glazier put a new glass in Whitaker's door first thing in the morning, and it will take some good sweeping to get rid of all the broken glass on the floor," said Dick.

"How was I saved?" asked Fred, after the surgeon had taken his departure, and they were left to themselves.

Dick gave him all the particulars.

"You're a brick, Dick. I owe my life to you," said Fred gratefully.

"No, you don't—that is, only incidentally. You owe it to Miss Ray."

CHAPTER X.—Two Hearts With But A Single Thought.

Fred realized that he had had a very narrow escape, and he was grateful to Providence for pulling him through. Dick went home with him, and on their way uptown they visited police headquarters, and Fred told his story to the officer in charge.

"It's about time you nabbed that rascal," he said to the officer. "This is the second attempt he has made on my life, and he couldn't come any nearer and miss it than he has this time. If you don't do something pretty soon you are liable to have another murder case on your hands, and I have a decided objection to playing the role of the victim."

The officer assured him that extra exertions would be taken to run Notte down, and with that assurance Fred continued on uptown with his chum. Fred didn't reach his office next day till about noon. He found Ruby eagerly and anxiously awaiting his arrival. She had read an account of the murderous attack on Fred in the morning paper, and had arrived at the office all broke up. Dick managed to run in and give her the full particulars, as well as to assure her that Fred had not suffered any serious consequences.

"Oh, Mr. Whitaker, I'm so glad you're able to be around," cried Ruby, jumping up when he appeared, her eyes sparkling with moisture which she could not hold back.

"I'm all right," he replied in his usual cheerful way. "I had a tough experience, but a miss is as good as a mile in the long run. I suppose you read the account in the morning paper."

"Yes, and Mr. Markham was in and told me how he saved you just in time."

"He saved me, of course, but I really owe my life to you, little girl, for he wouldn't have come around, only you asked him to do so. He said you looked greatly worried, and he came up here more to oblige you than because he thought there would be anything wrong. Now, how am I going to thank you for saving my life, for I feel that you did?"

"You mustn't thank me," she said with shining eyes. "You have done so much for me that I feel very, very happy to have been able to do something for you in return."

"Do you really feel happy over it?" he said, taking both her hands in his.

"Yes," she replied, without looking at him.

"And would you like to make me feel particularly happy, too?"

"Why, how can I?" she said in a low tone.

"How can you? By letting me know that you care for me. I have told you that I was attracted to you from the first, now I tell you that since you've been with me here I have seen that my first impression of you was right—that you are the best and dearest little girl in all the world. I have learned to care for you even more than if you were my sister. Do you understand what that means? That I love you, Ruby, with all my heart, and that I want you to become my wife some day. Do you care enough for me to say that you will come to me when I ask you? Do you, dear?"

He put his arms around her and drew her close to him, and she did not resist this freedom on his part. How could she, when she loved him with all her heart?

"Do you love me, Ruby?" he asked again, raising her averted head till they looked into each other's eyes.

The tender pleading in his tones bore down the last barrier of her maiden reserve, and with a soft "Yes," she buried her face on his shoulder. Fred's soul thrilled with joy as he felt her cling to him. It was the happiest moment in all his life. And it was the happiest moment in her young life, too. Fred sealed their engagement with half a dozen kisses snatched from her lips, and then their bliss was intruded on by a knock at the door. Fred opened it himself to give Ruby time to sit down and take up her book, on which she fastened her eyes and tried to still the throbings of her heart. Broker Prescott stood outside.

"Hello, Whitaker! I hardly expected to find you here after what I read in the paper about you, but I came up on a chance. Allow me to congratulate you on finding you alive and kicking," and he seized Fred's hand and shook it warmly.

"Come in, Mr. Prescott, and take a seat," said Fred, pulling him aside.

Prescott bowed to Ruby and sat down.

"Judging from the newspaper account, you had a mighty narrow escape," said the broker.

"I did. It was touch and go with me."

"Your friend Markham saved you?"

"Yes. He came up to see me just in the nick of time. We usually go home together. It happened he was sent to Brooklyn on an errand, which accounted for his being downtown so late, and learning that I expected to be detained on business, he came around to see whether I was still here. Only for that I'd have been a gone goose as sure as you sit there."

"Tell me the full particulars. The papers seemed to be rather meager on details. I believe three men attacked you, one of them being that villain who pinched my wallet down at the island."

"That's right," and Fred described all that happened, together with an account of how Dick came on the scene and saved his life.

"That Notte is a vindictive scoundrel," said the broker, "and the commission of a murder doesn't seem to worry him a bit. He's got it in for you bad."

"What surprises me is the failure of the police to catch him," said Fred. "The detectives have

been on the job for three weeks, but I don't see that they have done anything. If they don't run him down after this affair of yesterday, I can't see how they are earning their pay."

"Let us hope they'll get him," said the broker, rising. "Well, I must be getting down to the Curb. Good-morning."

A week passed away, and Notte still remained out of jail. Fred 'phoned headquarters several times, but got very little satisfaction. All he could learn was that several detectives were out looking for him. The boy was more than ever on his guard, now that he realized what a fierce enemy he had. Fred provided every detective in the financial district with a pretty accurate description of Notte, and how clever he was at disguising himself, and promised \$100 to the officer who should catch him. In the meantime, he devoted his attention to M. & R., which had gone up two points. Eight days after he bought the stock the attention of the brokers was attracted to it by its apparent scarceness, and a rush being made to buy it by many of them caused it to jump up to 74 in an hour. One of the traders employed by the syndicate then boosted it up three points more in a few minutes, and it became the center of considerable excitement.

All this happened one Monday morning when Fred was in the gallery of the Exchange, and he thought the boom was on at last. When he went to lunch it was going at 79, which put him \$11,000 ahead of the game. As he calculated on making \$20,000 out of this deal, he made no attempt to sell out. The newspapers drew the attention of the public to the rise in M. & R., and next day a crowd of small speculators came into the Street looking for it. As soon as the public took an interest in the stock the insiders let out a small quantity of it to encourage them. They bit at it like gudgeons, and the price kept on rising as the stock was fed to the eager purchasers. Fred watched it go up with great satisfaction.

When three o'clock came around it closed at 85. Next day it reached 90 at eleven o'clock, and the little operator decided that he would take no more chances on it, though it looked as if it might go to par. He went to the little bank and ordered his account closed out. It was done inside of ten minutes at 90 5-8. This gave Fred a profit of about \$22,300. When he collected his money he told Ruby that he was now worth \$34,000.

"That's a good deal of money," she said with a smile.

"Oh, that's only a flea-bite in Wall Street. A man wants to have \$100,000 at least to make any kind of a showing."

"Do you expect to make as much as that?"

"Do I? Why, I hope to make a million by the time we are ready to get married."

"Wouldn't you be satisfied with less than that?"

"Yes; but I believe in aiming high."

Ruby made no reply.

A million dollars fairly dazzled her senses. In her eyes it appeared to be a prodigious sum. She could not conceive how Fred, smart as she knew he was, could make so much. And then the thought troubled her—if Fred got to be so rich as that, would he be content to marry a poor girl like her? She loved him dearer every day, and she felt that if anything were to separate them it would break her heart, and she would

want to die. She need not have worried herself about such a thing, since there wasn't the least danger of the little operator going back on her. He wasn't built that way.

CHAPTER XI.—Fred Earns a Big Commission.

As Fred's standing advertisement in different papers was now creating considerable correspondence for him, which he got Ruby to answer in long hand, and enclose a manifolde typewritten market letter which he prepared for the purpose every day or two, the little operator began to figure that before long he would have work enough to keep a typist going part of the day at any rate. So he told Ruby one afternoon that he wanted her to go to an evening school where typewriting was taught, among other things, and learn how to manipulate a machine.

"I'll pay the cost of your tuition. All you'll have to do is to put in an hour or so nights at the school until you are able to work the machine in proper shape. I'll get a machine, and you can practice down here on my correspondence, so it should not take you long to become a proficient typewriter," said Fred.

Ruby was perfectly willing to do anything that Fred wished her to, and so she started in at the school right away that Fred selected. She tried her best to learn as quickly as possible, so as to be of immediate use to her employer, and she made good progress from the start. Practising most of the time in the office helped her greatly, and as she was a good speller, and understood the rules of punctuating very well, she was soon able to turn out very satisfactory work. Fred didn't consider it necessary for her to learn shorthand, as he expected to marry her by the time his business would require the services of a stenographer. Some weeks elapsed and he heard nothing further from Nathan Notte, so he judged that the detectives had made the city too hot for him to stay, and that he had gone somewhere else to avoid arrest. Still he did not relax his watchfulness, as he felt that the rascal was too vindictive to take any chances with. One morning, as he was sitting in his office reading a Wall Street paper, the door opened and a well-dressed gentleman entered.

"I wish to see Fred Whitaker," he said.

"That's my name. Take a seat," said the little operator.

The gentleman did so, and looked around the office before speaking again.

"You are operating as a broker, I believe, young man?" he said.

"I am trying to get a start in that line, but at present I am operating more for myself than any one else," replied Fred.

"I dare say," answered the gentleman, with a slight smile. "I came to see you because Mr. Edward Prescott has spoken very highly about you to me. My name is John Ward, and I'm a large operator on the market."

"I know you by reputation, Mr. Ward, and am glad to make your acquaintance."

"What I have to say to you is strictly confidential. You haven't a private room, have you?"

"No, sir. This represents the whole of my office facilities. You can talk here without any fear of our conversation being overheard."

"But this young lady? I would prefer—"

"She is my confidential assistant, and you may rely on her secrecy. Still, if you would rather not talk in her presence, I can send her out."

"I think you had better in the present instance. I can say all I have to say in ten minutes."

"Very well. Put on your hat, Ruby, and take a short stroll."

"I want to get hold of a lot of D. & C. stock. For reasons I cannot very well put my regular brokers on the job. Finding myself in a quandary, I thought of you. You are not generally known to be a broker, and if you are as smart as Mr. Prescott says you are, I think you will fill the bill. If you do the business up to the handle you'll make a very large commission, for I shall pay you the regular rates, same as my brokers get. I want you to go around the offices and buy all the D. & C. you can get as close to the market as possible. The stock is now ruling at 80. You will have to offer something above that, but it will take good judgment and shrewdness to secure the stock without causing suspicion that you are buying a large amount for interested parties. If that suspicion got around you would be watched, and as soon as your purpose was discounted the stock would rise rapidly, which is the very thing I want to avoid. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have the shares delivered C. O. D. at Driggs & Co., bankers. I have made special arrangements with them to accept and pay for all certificates of D. & C. presented at their bank. At the outside you must not give more than an advance of two points on the prevailing price, but I look to have you get the majority of the shares much less. Buy every share you can find, and notify me the moment you run against a snag. Don't call personally at my office. If you haven't a messenger send the young lady or an A. D. T. boy."

"All right, sir."

"Hand me your desk pad and I will give you the order in regular shape."

In a few moments Fred held the order for an unlimited number of D. & C. shares, the price not exceeding two points above the market rate.

"You thoroughly understand what I expect of you, do you?"

"Yes, sir," replied Fred, tickled to death at the large order he had received.

"Very well. If you do well I shall probably include you in my list of special brokers, and you will find that much to your advantage. Should anybody ask you at any time if you know me it would be advisable for you to say 'No.' It is often necessary to prevaricate in Wall Street from motives of policy. Now I will say good-by, and trust to find that you will make good in this matter, which is of vital consequence to me, and of no little importance to yourself."

Mr. Ward then shook hands with Fred, telling him to get on the job at once, and left. As soon as Ruby returned Fred put on his hat and went out. He first made a tour of the building and soon found a broker who had 5,000 shares of D. & C. he was willing to sell for 81.

"My customer wants to get about 6,000 at 80 1-2," said Fred. "Can't you come down?"

After some haggling the trader agreed to sell at 80 3-4.

"I'll take the stock," said the little operator. "Have you got it in your office?"

"No, it's at my bankers," was the reply.

Fred understood from that that the broker had hypothecated it that is, he had left it with his banker as security for money borrowed, a very common occurrence.

"When can you deliver it?"

"Within an hour."

"Here is your order. Send it C. O. D. at the address indicated."

"Who are you buying this for, young man?"

"A new customer."

"Humph! You are young to be a broker."

"Yes, sir, but I have been four years in the Street."

"Ah, indeed! Who did you work for?"

"William Andrews."

"He died a few months ago. Well, I wish you luck. I'll send the certificates around to Driggs & Co. before noon."

Fred left and went to another broker on that floor. The trader was not in, but the cashier said they had 10,000 D. & C. which they were carrying for a customer who had just instructed them to sell.

"I couldn't break the block," he said.

"I'll take it as it stands for 80 1-2," said Fred.

"Who do you represent?" asked the cashier.

"Myself."

"Do you mean to say you have the money to pay for \$800,000 worth of stock?"

"My bankers will honor any order drawn on them to the extent of my pile."

"Are you of age? You don't look it."

"We won't discuss that. Will you deliver that stock at my bankers for 80 1-2?"

"If we are sure of getting our money we will; but if this is a practical joke you think to make us a butt of, why—"

"You might telephone Driggs & Co. and ask them if they will accept 10,000 shares of D. & C. on my order at 80 1-2. That ought to satisfy you."

"Wait a moment, then."

The cashier went to the telephone booth in the counting-room and communicated with Driggs & Co. The reply he received proved satisfactory, and when he came back to his desk he accepted Fred's order and handed out the firm's memo, which clinched the deal. Fred found several small lots of D. & C. in the building, and had no trouble in buying them. Then he went to a skyscraper across the street and secured about 6,000 there. Having captured 28,000 shares at an average price of 80 5-8, he concluded he would go to lunch. Between one and three he bought 20,000 more, and then returned to his office well satisfied with his day's work on which his commission would amount to \$6,000. He sent a note around to Mr. Ward by Ruby, telling him what he had done so far, and the operator's reply congratulated him on his success. Next day he had a more difficult job gathering in 18,000 shares, but he managed to get the stock at an average of 81 3-8, the market price having gone up to 80 3-4. His second day's commission footed up \$2,250. It took him two days more to find 14,000 additional shares, and then he sent word to Mr.

Ward that he had bought up about all there was in sight.

"You have done very well, indeed, Whitaker," wrote back the operator. "No one seems to have noticed that such a large quantity of D. & C., representing a market value at current rates of over six and a millions, has been gobbled up by one party. I was afraid that it would get out some way, but you performed your part so well that no one is the wiser of what has been going on. Send me your statement by mail and I will forward check for commission. You will hear from me when I have something else to put in your way."

Fred mailed his statement, and a day or two later received a check for \$10,000.

"How is that for four days' work?" he said, showing it to Ruby.

"Splendid!" she replied enthusiastically.

"That makes me worth \$44,000. I guess I can afford to get you a fine diamond engagement ring now," he said.

"No, you mustn't get anything expensive," she replied. "I should much prefer a cheap one, and should appreciate it just as much as if it cost a lot of money. I want to wear it, and it would look singular for me, living in a cheap tenement, to show a very valuable diamond ring. It might tempt somebody to attack and rob me."

"That's true. I didn't think of it. I have been thinking of having you and your mother move uptown near where I live. It would be nicer for you both, and convenient for me. In fact, I have often thought if Notte were in the city it would be easy for him to reach me in the neighborhood of Rivington Street."

"Mother and I would gladly move if we could afford to," she replied.

"I'll raise your wages to \$12 a week so you can afford it."

"You are very good, Fred, but I am not worth that to you yet."

"Sweetheart, you are worth a million to me, and you know it," he said, pulling her head back and kissing her. "So don't make any further objection."

And she didn't.

CHAPTER XII.—In the Shadow of Death Again.

A few days afterward D. & C. began to go up, and Fred was satisfied that his customer, Mr. Ward, was at the head of a syndicate that was booming it. The D. & C. deal proved a great success for its promoters, but not such a success for the outsiders who bought it at high figures. Many of these people were caught badly in the slump which set in when they were not looking for it. The market was pretty shaky for a week after the boom came to an end, and during that time Fred noticed indications of the formation of another boom, this time in A. & B. He concluded, as the stock was selling low, to take a chance in it, and accordingly he purchased 2,000 shares at 72. A week later the market rallied, and A. & B. went up to 78. Fred bought another 1,000 shares at 82. This took the greater part of his available funds, and he proceeded to watch his new investment with an eagle eye, while Ruby attended to all his routine office work as well as he could have done himself. She and her mother had moved to a nice cheap flat within two blocks of where

Fred lived, and he called more frequently than ever on her, and took her to many places of amusement. It was at this time that Fred received a visit from Mr. Ward's office boy. He brought a note from the operator which informed him that an old gentleman living on the outskirts of Newark had 1,000 shares of Erie which he, Ward, wanted to get hold of, and he commissioned Fred to call on the owner and make him an offer of 42 for his stock, which was nearly a point above the market, enclosing a certified check signed by a friend of his, on the Manhattan National Bank, to pay for it. So Fred, after telling Ruby where he was bound, started for the Cortlandt Street Ferry. On his way up Wall Street he met Dick.

"What's your rush, Fred?" asked his friend, catching him by the arm.

"I'm in a hurry. Got to catch a train."

"Where are you bound?"

"Newark. Going to call on an old gentleman who lives on the Roseville Road. I expect to be back before four."

"Where's your umbrella? It looks like rain."

"Oh, bother an umbrella. I don't believe it'll rain. At any rate, I can find a place of shelter if I need it. Goodby."

Fred caught a boat that connected with the next local train that stopped at Newark, and boarded the last car. Among the passengers was a rough-looking man who saw Fred when he entered and, noting where he sat, watched him all the way to Newark. When Fred got out he alighted, too, and followed the boy to a trolley car. He got on the back platform and kept his eyes on the young operator. When Fred left the car at a certain corner he jumped off also, and tagged along after him in a careless way.

Fred didn't notice that he was being followed. He was thinking how he would interview the old gentleman about his stock. Finally he reached his destination, a handsome cottage surrounded by well-kept grounds, and entered by the front gate. The rough-looking man stopped, and then took up his position on the opposite side of the way. Fred had hardly entered the house when it began to rain. The watcher looked around for shelter, and seeing a vacant house close by, got on the veranda and sat there. Fred was shown into the parlor of the cottage, and the old gentleman made his appearance. The little operator stated the object of his errand.

"How did you learn that I owned 1,000 shares of Erie stock?" asked the little old gentleman curiously.

"I heard so from my customer who sent me to purchase it."

"What is the gentleman's name?"

"You will have to excuse me revealing his name, as that is against our rules."

"So you're a Wall Street broker?"

"Yes, sir."

"Dear me! You look very young to be in the business. So you offer me 42, eh?"

"Yes, sir; that is what I was instructed to give."

"I really think I ought to have more."

"It is ruling at 41 1-8."

"I know it closed at 41 yesterday, but it may be higher than 42 now."

"The price I have just mentioned is what it stood at when I left the Street about an hour ago. I hardly think it has gone up since to any extent."

"Did you bring the money to pay for the stock?"

"I brought a certified check for \$42,000, payable to your order, on the chance that you would sell."

"Let me see it, please."

Fred handed it to him, and the shrewd old gentleman looked at the signature. As it was not signed by Ward, the old man was none the wiser as to the identity of the party who wanted his stock, though he naturally supposed it was the person who had given the check, and whose name was not familiar to him. Mr. Ward had reasons for believing that the old gentleman would hold out for a higher price if he saw his name attached to the check, that's why he did not send his own check—a trick he often adopted, though Fred was unaware of the fact.

In fact, Fred had much to learn about the maneuvers used by the big men of the Street to hide their identity in a transaction.

The old gentleman, finding that he did not know the person whose name was signed to the check, decided to sell his Erie stock at the price offered.

He went upstairs to his private safe, got the certificate and brought it down to the parlor. In a few minutes Fred had completed his business. It was raining heavily then, and the old gentleman invited him to remain till the weather cleared. He gladly accepted the offer, and soon he and his host were engaged in a discussion about some late discoveries made in Syria by famous savants. Fred was fairly well informed on the subject, having seen a full account recently in a Sunday newspaper, while the old gentleman, being highly educated and an extensive reader, threw a lot of light on the subject that greatly interested the little operator. In this way nearly two hours elapsed.

Then the rain let up and Fred took his leave. The sky was dark and still threatening, and it was late in the afternoon.

"I won't reach New York much before six," he thought, as he walked rapidly along.

The rough-looking man had impatiently awaited his appearance from his place of refuge under the roof of the veranda of the vacant house. When Fred left the cottage the man followed him down the road for several blocks till they came near a small saloon. An alley ran between the corner saloon and the adjoining house. It was provided with a door. When Fred got opposite the door, the rough-looking man came up behind him, and, catching him by the arm unawares, shoved him into the alley, and as the boy turned to remonstrate, struck him a blow under the ear that laid him out unconscious. The man then dragged him up the alley as far as another door, through which he carried him into a small room back of the saloon fitted with a round table and several chairs. He lifted Fred into one of the chairs, and, after going through his clothes, taking his watch, money, and the Erie certificate, he laid him across the table like a drunken man.

Then he went into the saloon and held a conference with the proprietor, who was behind the bar. The man followed him into the little room, and between them they carried Fred upstairs to a back room, where they laid him on the bed.

"So this is the young fellow who has given you so much trouble, eh?" said the proprietor of the saloon.

"That's the chap. It was an unlucky day for him that he butted into my business," said the

rough-looking man, whose voice sounded strangely like Nathan Notte's. "Since he escaped me by the skin of his teeth two months ago, when I thought I had him dead sure, I've been watching for another chance to reach him. The detective, however, got a clue to my roost, and I had to come over here to escape them. This time I'll make sure of this lad. He shan't leave this room alive."

"How are you goin' to fix him? I can't have any blood shed here."

"I've got a bottle of chloroform in my pocket. I'll saturate a rag with it and let him breathe it till he peters out."

"And then what? You've got to get the body away so his death will not be traced to this house."

"Leave that to me, Grady. I'll see that you're not mixed up in this."

"I hope so. I don't want to be jugged under suspicious circumstances."

"I'll fetch a light wagon around in the course of an hour or two, after it gets dark, and carry the boy over to the Passaic River and dump him in at a convenient spot. There'll be no sign on him to show how he came to his death, so it will go as an accident."

"Look out that you're not seen doin' it."

"Trust me for that. It isn't the first time I've done the trick."

The rough-looking man laughed dryly, and taking a bottle of pungent-smelling liquid from his pocket, and picking up a towel from the washstand, he saturated the latter with the drug and laid it over Fred's face.

"Come," he said to his companion. "We'll go downstairs now and let him start on his journey to the unknown alone."

The men left the room, locked the door, and their footsteps were heard descending the stairs.

CHAPTER XIII.—The End of Nathan Notte.

Hardly had the key ceased to rattle in the lock when a head, covered with red hair, was thrust out from under the bed. The owner of the head scrambled out from his place of concealment and showed himself in full. He was a tough-looking boy of sixteen years of age. He looked at the motionless form of the little operator on the bed and then snatched the towel from his face.

"Hully gee! Chloroform. Goin' to murder the feller. Nathan Notte is gettin' wuss everyday, and Pat Grady would be jest as bad if he had the sand. It's a lucky thing for this guy that I came in here out of the rain and then fell asleep under the bed. They've locked the door, but that doesn't matter when there's a winder handy. Too bad I can't take this chap with me," the boy muttered as he shoved the window up softly, "but as he's clean off, I couldn't do it. I'll just put the dry end of the towel over his face, to deceive them bloody-minded chaps, in case they should come back sudden like, and then I'll go for a cop and put him on to the job. This is where I get square with Nathan Notte and Grady."

Thus speaking the boy, whose name was Reddy O'Rourke, slipped out at the window and dropped to the ground beneath, leaving the window open after him, the damp, cool air blew across Fred's

covered face and helped to revive him, though he was coming to rapidly, anyway, the chloroform not having been long enough over his face to have had any material effect on him. Five minutes after the red-headed boy left the room he sat up, throwing the towel off his face. He looked around the room in surprise.

"How in creation did I get here?" he asked himself in astonishment.

Then he remembered the unexpected assault made upon him, and the blow which had sent his wits wool-gathering.

"I must have been brought up in this room by that rascal, whoever he was. I wonder what his object was in fetching me here? Robbery?"

Fred felt for his money and found it gone. His watch and chain were likewise missing. With a thrill of apprehension he thrust his hand into his coat pocket and to his dismay discovered that the Erie certificate was gone, too.

"I've been cleaned out for fair, and left here to recover at my leisure. I must get away and notify the police at once."

He walked to the door and found it locked.

"Locked in. That looks as if the fellow intended to hold me prisoner. Yet he left the window open. Possibly because I can't escape that way. I'll see, however. I'm ready to take considerable risk to get away."

When he looked out of the window and saw he was only one story above the ground, he was much surprised.

"It's as simple as rolling off a log to get away from here. Why was I locked in, then? Perhaps to prevent me going through the house. That's it. The rascal left the window open as an invitation for me to go that way. Well, it's my only path, so I'll have to—"

Footsteps ascending the stairs at that moment interrupted his thoughts.

"Maybe it's the rascal returning. I'd better make my exit quick."

At that moment his eyes lighted on a policeman's billy standing in a corner. With that in his hand he did not fear any man. If it was the rascal returning to see if he was gone, here was a chance to lay him out and possibly recover his property as well as the Erie certificate. He snatched up the club and stood where the door on opening would hide him for the moment. The key rattled in the lock, the door opened, and he recognized the rough-looking man who had jumped him.

As the fellow uttered an exclamation of rage and surprise on seeing the window open and his victim gone, Fred struck him a heavy blow. He pitched forward on his face, quite stunned. Fred closed the door and locked it to prevent the possibility of interruption. Then he bent over the man to search him, and started back in surprise when under the disarranged beard he recognized the well-known features of Nathan Notte.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "Notti! So I've been up against him once more, and he didn't kill me when I lay at his mercy. I don't understand it. When he came in he acted as if he was taken aback at something. Did he expect to find me here with that window open? Well, this is my chance to capture him and turn him over to the police if I can. But first I must search him."

To his great satisfaction Fred found all his property, as well as the Erie certificate, on Notte's person. Then he raised him on the bed. Tearing several strips from the coverlet he bound the rascal hand and foot.

"This will do to gag him with," said the little operator, picking up the towel.

He bound it tightly around the man's mouth, and as it happened, the end saturated with the drug lay close to Notte's nose. Thus unconsciously the boy used the instrument of death intended for himself on the would-be murderer. Shutting the window, Fred unlocked the door and looked out. The coast was clear, so he passed outside, reversed the key, locked the villain in, and put the key in his pocket. Walking softly downstairs, he found himself in a small entry, with two doors.

One communicated with the saloon, the other with the alley. At random he opened the one on the alley, and walked out. In another minute he was on the street. Hurrying to the nearest drug store, where there was a public telephone, he communicated with the Newark Police Headquarters, told his story, and asked that a couple of officers be sent at once to the store where he would await their coming and lead them to the house.

In twenty minutes a patrol wagon drove up with two policemen in it. Fred jumped in and directed the driver where to go. Within half a block of the saloon a red-headed boy was seen hurrying along with a policeman. The boy saw the patrol wagon and recognized Fred with a gasp of surprise.

"Hi, hi!" he shouted. "Stop!"

"What do you want?" asked the driver reining in.

"How did you get out of that room?" Reddy asked Fred.

The little operator was surprised at the question. It showed that the red-headed boy knew about his having been in the house connected with the saloon.

"Who are you, and how it is you know about what happened to me?" asked Fred suspiciously.

"Never you mind about that. I was just fetching a cop to help you out," replied the boy.

Then Reddy was induced to explain how he had gone into the room to escape from the rain; had been awakened by the two men bringing in Fred, and how he had overheard Notte plan to drug him to death, and afterward get rid of his body by way of the Passaic River.

Fred was rather astonished at the boy's story. It showed him that the villain Notte had really attempted his life for the third time, and had been defeated by this red-headed boy. The boy's statement accounted for the open window.

"Well, you did me a good turn, young man," he said, "and I'll make it all right with you. I've turned the tables on Notte. He's bound and gagged in that room, provided somebody hasn't come to his rescue while I've been away, and these officers are going to get him now if he's still there."

The patrol wagon dashed up to the corner, and the policemen alighted. Fred led them into the alley, and thence through the door into the entry, where they were confronted by Grady.

He was immediately arrested and handcuffed, in spite of his protests. The party then went

to the room, and Fred opened the door. Nathan Notte lay on the bed, just as he had left him.

"What a smell of chloroform!" exclaimed one of the officers as they entered.

He walked to the window and threw it open to air the room. One of the other policemen took the towel from Notte's face.

"It's got chloroform on it," he said.

"That's the stuff he tried to kill this chap with," said Reddy.

The policeman raised Notte up. His face was ghastly white, his arms and body were as limp as the towel, and his eyes were half open, while his jaw had dropped.

"Why, that man is dead!" said one of the officers.

"Dead!" exclaimed Fred. "How can it be? I didn't hit him hard enough to kill him."

"Possibly not, though that will have to be proved. But in tying that towel around his mouth you must have placed the end saturated with the drug over his face, and that has done the business, if your blow didn't."

"Good gracious!" ejaculated the young operator.

CHAPTER XIV.—Fred's Luck Continues.

"Is he really dead?" asked Fred.

"As a coffin nail. He's as good a candidate for the morgue as I've ever seen," replied the officer. "I'm afraid you'll have to go to the station house with us. And it's pretty certain you'll be locked up and brought before a magistrate. But I dare say this boy's testimony will be of great use to you. Come along, Reddy, you'll have to go with us as a witness for this young man and against the chap we arrested downstairs."

The dead body of Nathan Notte was loaded into the wagon, along with Grady, Reddy, and the policeman, while Fred was allowed to ride with the driver. Reaching the station house, the situation was explained to the officer in charge by one of the policemen. Fred told his story, and referred to the previous attempts made on his life in Wall Street by the dead rascal, who was wanted in consequence by the New York police.

The little operator was taken before the chief of police, where he went over his story again, while Grady and Reddy were locked up. The chief communicated with the head of the Manhattan Detective Bureau, and as the result thereof permitted Fred to go free. The Newark papers had a full account of the affair next morning, and Fred had another thrilling story of a narrow escape from death to tell Ruby at the office, as well as Dick later on.

Next morning Grady was sentenced to a year at Snake Hill by a magistrate on Reddy's testimony and police evidence of his bad character. Fred was present at the court, but took no part in the proceedings, since he could say nothing against the saloonkeeper. Subsequently both he and Reddy were called on to testify at the coroner's inquest, and the verdict of the jury exonerated the little operator from any blame for the crook's death. Before leaving Newark, Fred took Reddy to a savings banks and deposited \$500 to his credit, as an evidence of his gratitude to the tough boy for saving his life.

Ruby and Dick were both greatly pleased to,

know that Nathan Notte was dead. While he was alive and at large they had felt more or less anxious all the time about Fred's safety. Three days later A. & B. stock reached 90, and Fred decided to sell out at that price, which would give him a profit of \$18 a share on the first 2,000 he bought; \$12 a share on the second purchase of 1,000; and \$8 a share on the third purchase of 1,000—altogether \$56,000, which raised his capital to \$100,000.

Shortly afterward Mr. Ward again called on Fred and commissioned him to buy a large quantity of M. & N. shares on the quiet. The little operator executed the order with the same tact and success that he had the former order from the millionaire operator, and he gathered a commission of about \$11,000 this time. He now had about two dozen regular out-of-town customers, and several city ones, and though he didn't make a whole lot out of them, they represented the beginning of a brokerage business which he hoped to greatly enlarge in the course of time.

One day he noticed that L. & G. was going up. He had not had a deal on for nearly a month, and was impatient to get on to something that would give him another financial lift. He went around among the brokers making inquiries about the stock in an off-hand way, and finally satisfied himself that it was a good thing to get in on if handled properly. So he bought about 6,000 shares at 92, the market price at the time. About the same time Broker Prescott tipped him off to a mining stock named Red Crow, located in a new district which had just been opened up, and he bought 50,000 shares at 5 cents a share which footed up \$2,500, and made Ruby a present of the block.

This was promoter's stock, sold for the purpose of developing the mine. If the mine became a satisfactory producer of silver and gold ore the shares would be eventually worth many times what Fred paid for them. If, on the contrary, the mine did not make good, the little operator would suffer the loss of part, if not all, of his investment. The prospects, however, looked good, and Fred believed that Ruby would some day be able to realize handsomely on this stock. In any event, he was now so well off that he wouldn't miss the \$2,500 if his sweetheart didn't get anything out of it.

About a week after he bought the L. & G. it was up to 95, and he bought 2,000 shares more of it, though the bank found some trouble in finding it, for it was getting scarce, a pretty good sign that it was being cornered by some syndicate, though Fred had no evidence to show that it really was. The market being a bullish one helped matters along, and soon after the traders began taking a special interest in L. & G.

Everybody in the speculative line then began bidding for the stock, and, as always happens when the demand is greater than the supply, the price went up, and the Exchange became a scene of great excitement. L. & G. speedily reached par, and Fred began to consider the advisability of getting out. He found out several brokers who were short on the stock and offered to let them have various quantities of his holdings at two points above the market.

In this way he got rid of his shares without putting it on the market at all. The average

price he got for his shares was 103. Thus he made a profit of \$11 a share on his 6,000 and \$8 a share on his 2,000, or a total profit of \$82,000, which made him worth \$190,000.

"Things seem to be coming my way fast," he said to Ruby, after he had disposed of his holdings. "Another lucky deal ought to make me worth a quarter of a million. Wall Street is the greatest place in this country for making money fast, if you have luck and know how to work the ropes."

"It seems so," she smilingly replied.

"And, on the other hand, you can lose a million in an hour if things go the wrong way."

"I hope things will never go the wrong way with you."

"I hope so, too; but then you never can tell," he replied, taking up a paper and beginning to read.

CHAPTER XV.—Cornering the "Bears" of Wall Street.

The success that the little operator was making in Wall Street did not escape the knowledge of the brokers, and they talked the matter over among themselves.

"Why, I understand on good authority that he made over \$80,000 on the late rise in L. & G.," said one.

"I heard so, too," said another. "He must have been born lucky. Still, I don't see how he did it, unless somebody who's a good friend of his handed out a tip on what was going to happen."

"They say he's worth a quarter of a million," said a third trader.

"It doesn't seem possible that a boy could make so much as that," remarked the first speaker.

"He may have it, and I think we ought to get busy and see if we can't get some of it away from him," said the broker named Brown.

"I'm willing to snip a little of his fleece, if any one can show me how to do it," said a broker, whose name was Jenkins.

"Come over to my office and we'll talk the matter over," said Brown, and the crowd of three went along with him.

It happened, however, that Dick Markham overheard enough of their conversation to put him wise to its import. He knew all the four brokers by name, and that afternoon he ran in and saw Fred. He told the little operator what he had heard, gave him the names of the traders, and advised him to be on his guard against some trick on their part.

Fred smiled and said he guessed he could take care of his bunch of fleece. On the following day Broker Brown called on Fred. After telling the boy how glad he was to hear he was making money, he proposed that Fred go into a syndicate that he and his friends were forming to corner and boom a certain stock the name of which he didn't mention.

"We are giving you this chance because we want to have a lucky person with us to help things along. We shall want you to go in to the extent of \$100,000, and I guarantee you will double your money."

"I will consider the matter and let you know. What did you say the name of the stock was?" asked Fred.

"I didn't say. I can't tell you that till you

have put up a guarantee that you'll come in. You know if you didn't go in you could use the information to your individual advantage that might hurt us."

"Oh, all right. I'll let you know by Thursday if I will go in. It looks rather good to me, I confess," said Fred in an innocent way.

"Good! You'll find it is the finest thing you ever touched. Just like finding money," replied his caller with simulated enthusiasm.

Fred nodded in an encouraging way, and the broker departed. Then the little operator put on his hat and went out. He called on Prescott and told him about the visit he had from Broker Brown, the proposition the trader had made him, and then what he had learned about the intentions of the four brokers through his friend Dick. Prescott laughed.

"Of course, you won't go into any scheme proposed by Brown," he said.

"I should say not; but I'd like to catch those traders in a net of their own making. How can I, do you suppose?"

"I'll tell you a plan that might work. How much money can you call on?"

"Two hundred thousand, about."

"Well, I happen to know that one of the biggest syndicates on the Street has succeeded in cornering N. & O. stock. It is at this moment as scarce as hen's teeth, but the pool is preventing that fact from getting out by making many wash sales among themselves. I got the news too late to be of much use to me. I found I couldn't buy over 1,000 shares. Now I'll put up \$100,000 with you to add to your \$200,000. Then I'll send word to Brown that you are buying N. & O. to the limit of your pile. I'll also get a tip to another member of the four brokers that a syndicate has been formed to 'bear' N. & O. The four will be sure to get together and figure out that the best thing they can do is to sell you N. & O. Brown will probably approach you on the subject, and you will tell him that you are ready to take in as much as 30,000 shares if they'll sell it on a 10 per cent. deposit. That means you are prepared to put up \$250,000 security in cash. That bait will catch Brown, and he and his friends will sell you the stock in expectation that when the slump sets in the four of them will divide your money between them."

"That will be just the thing," said Fred enthusiastically, and the scheme was at once set in motion.

On the second day following Brown called at Fred's office and told him he had heard that he was buying N. & O. stock.

"That's right," replied the little operator. "I and another broker have formed a little syndicate of our own, and we are going to buy 30,000 shares right away."

"As N. & O. is ruling at 80, that will represent nearly two and a half million dollars. You chaps must be flush," said Brown in a doubtful tone.

"Oh, we're going to buy on a 10 per cent. deposit," replied Fred.

"That makes a lot of difference. Well, I can sell you 30,000 shares right now. Several of us have that amount of the stock, and if you are ready to put up \$250,000 deposit we'll make the deal with you."

"Who are the others?"

Brown mentioned their names.

"Fetch them up here, and I'll buy the stock." Twenty minutes later the four brokers called at his office. Fred made a deal with them for the 30,000 shares, and with \$250,000 in their pockets they departed in high glee. The very next day N. & O. began to go up. At first Brown and his associates thought nothing of this. A day or two later, when the rumor began to get around that the stock had been cornered by some syndicate, they began to feel somewhat uneasy.

They began making inquiries, but could learn nothing definite. As a good deal of the stock continued to change hands apparently at the Exchange, they thought it could not be cornered. The price continued to advance, however, and when it reached 90 the wash sales ceased. Then the scarceness of the stock became apparent. A syndicate broker went on the floor and in an hour bid the price to 100.

When Brown and his friends saw that, they had a fit. They rushed around to try and borrow enough of the stock to cover their sale to Fred, but found that nobody had any. Then they tried to buy the stock on the market, but there wasn't any to be had. That day the price closed at 105. Next morning it opened at 106. By noon it was going at 110.

Then Fred got the tip from Prescott to sell the 30,000 shares through the market after first offering to let Brown and his friends out at 110. Fred called on Brown and asked for the stock, saying he was now ready to pay for it, which statement was, of course, a bluff, for he knew that Brown and his associates couldn't deliver it. Brown threw up his hands and admitted that he couldn't deliver the shares.

"I'll let you out at the market, which is 110," said Fred.

"I will see my partners in this deal and let you know in an hour if we can accept your terms. I'm afraid it spells ruin."

Inside of an hour Brown and his friends raked the money together and settled with Fred at 110, the market price then being 112. Fred made a profit of \$600,000 and Prescott cleared half as much.

On his twenty-first birthday he and Ruby were married quietly in her mother's plain little flat and they started at once on a short honeymoon to Florida. Of Fred's later career we have nothing to say, since he is now a big operator and broker, so we will let our curtain fall while he still remains a little operator.

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or

The Boy Firemen of Fairdale

By Gaston Garne

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)

"The warden and his family sleep below. There are six guards, but three of them are off duty at night. The fire first broke out in the basement. That it was incendiary, I know. One of the turnkeys was a traitor and admitted a couple of desperadoes by the lower door. These had keys and opened every cell door in the confusion. The prisoners rushed out and many of them made their escape. Clifford and his pals were the first to escape. From what I heard them say, the game was planned to effect their release. I was not liberated, but left here to die."

Will Norton listened to this thrilling recital with intense interest. By this time he had forced the lock and the cell door swung open.

Mr. Wade stepped out of the cell. He was for the moment a free man, yet it had now become a problem as to how they would be able to get out of the building. Fire had filled the passage by which Will had entered the jail.

For a moment the young fireman was in a quandary.

But it was only a moment. He grasped Mr. Wade's arm and led him along the gallery to a window in the front of the building. This, strangely enough, was not barred. A single blow of Will's axe dashed the window out.

Then the young fireman hung over the sill. He was seen by the crowd and the firemen below. A great shout went up.

A ladder was hurried forward. It was raised to the window-ledge. Will and Mr. Wade slid quickly down to the ground.

In the crowd the Californian was quickly lost, so far as identity was concerned. Will Norton led him beyond the fire-lines and then asked:

"What will you do, Mr. Wade? It will be easy for you to escape now if you choose."

"No," replied the Californian, "that would be a bad move, Will. I prefer to stay and face the music."

"I think you are wise," replied Will. "I believe that your vindication is near at hand."

"I hope so! I'd like to square accounts with Dugdale."

"You certainly will have the opportunity. Just now Dugdale is playing some desperate cards that will get him into trouble. It was important to him that Clifford should be allowed to escape from prison."

"Great guns! I made up my mind that was the way of it."

"Well, you can be pretty sure of it," declared Will. "This whole scheme is his work. You know he has wealth and can offer a large bribe. I know for a fact that he tried to bribe Police Captain Daly."

"The old scoundrel!"

Just at this moment the warden came up excitedly. He had seen Wade and exclaimed:

"I am sorry to be compelled to hold you, Mr. Wade. You are the only prisoner who has remained to face the music."

"Well, you see I am an innocent man," said the Californian, with a laugh. "I do not fear my trial."

"I hope you will be proven innocent," said the warden. "But there are several of the attaches of this prison who will have to answer to serious charges if they can be found."

"They are but tools," declared Will. "There is a strong hand back of them."

"You think that the game was to release Clifford and his pals?"

"I do."

The warden was silent a moment, then he said: "Well, I am of that opinion also."

Will now was called away to direct the efforts of his company. The fire had now begun to yield to the efforts of the firemen.

Much of the lower rooms had been burned out. But the upper stories of the jail were spared.

Not until the last ember was extinguished did Monarch No. 4 hitch onto their engine and return to the fire-house.

After they had housed the engine, which was long after midnight, the boys, tired by their hard work, went home. Will reached his home a little later and went at once to bed.

The next day the town was astir. The incendiary fire at the jail and the escape of Clifford and his pals had created tremendous excitement.

The people were thoroughly aroused. Public sentiment was strong. There was a powerful feeling that Dugdale, the wealthy man of the town, was responsible for the affair.

There was some strong talk. There was even a proposition to send a citizens' committee to wait upon Dugdale and ask an explanation.

When the detectives returned, with no trace of Clifford, the sentiment grew more powerful; but yet nothing was done.

The days passed into a week. Dugdale was not seen in the town; but there was one thing that disturbed him.

Wesley Wade had been admitted to bail, and was out of prison and with his family at the hotel. The Californian's first move was to file a counter-suit against Dugdale to make him prove his title to the Red Creek mine.

As this title came from Clifford, it was Wade's hope to show that it was of no value, coming from such a source. At least he would make it uncomfortable for Dugdale in proving his title rights.

"Never mind, Will Norton," said the bluff Californian, with a confident nod. "I've lived in this world long enough to know that it is full of ups and downs. You will see that the haughty Mr. Dugdale will have his turn."

And the words proved prophetic.

It was true that August Dugdale was nearing an epoch in his career which promised unpleasant results.

CHAPTER XX.

Mr. Wade's Departure.

But the fickleness of public sentiment was speedily to be demonstrated. As the days passed,

interest waned, and so it happened that when August Dugdale was called to the hearing demanded by Wesley Wade, he was able to again defeat the Californian.

In a few concise words Dugdale was able to silence his accuser.

He described his relations with Clifford in a plausible way. They were simply those of business. Clifford had sold him his rights in the Red Creek Mine.

If any parties, for instance Wild Norton, or even the once-assumed owner, Wesley Wade, desired to purchase, terms would be discussed. Clifford had proved his title, and he, Dugdale, had received it from Clifford. He was sorry for Mr. Wade, and would offer him easy terms if he wished to purchase the mine.

Will Norton was dumbfounded at the turn in affairs.

Dugdale did not deny that he had made an effort in Clifford's behalf to secure his release from jail, even through the bribing of Police Captain Daly.

"I wanted to see if the head of our police department here was incorruptible," he said, with a grin. "I give him credit for standing by his guns."

That evening, after the hearing, the Wades dropped into the little cottage home of Will and his mother. A long evening of discourse followed. The subject was mostly that of the hearing and its result.

Mrs. Wade was much depressed. Nellie was, however, courageous, while the Californian himself was in good spirits.

"I wish we had never come to Fairdale," said Mrs. Wade. "We should never have met August Dugdale, and therefore would never have got into this trouble."

"Cheer up, mother," cried Wade, with a careless laugh. "We are playing in hard luck a little bit just now, but we'll pull out all right, I have a few years of active life left in which to recoup our fortunes."

"I have a belief that you will yet defeat Dugdale," said Will. "He is a man who depends upon rascally methods, and he will make a slip by and by."

"Right, my boy," cried the Californian. "Now I have a proposal to make." His voice grew serious, and all eyes were turned upon him.

"To-morrow," said Wade, "I am going to leave Fairdale on an extended trip. I mean to go to Red Creek and shall search for evidence to support my title there. I have three months to spare before my second trial for fraud and forgery. I have the permission of my bondsman to go. But while I am gone, I must feel that mother and Nellie are in good hands."

Wade always spoke of his wife as mother. Mrs. Wade and Nellie both started up. Their faces were eager and flushed.

"No," said Wade, anticipating their inquiry, "it will be impossible for me to take you along. I am sorry to say that I shall have to leave you here."

"But it will be so lonesome at the hotel," cried Nellie.

"I have considered that, my daughter," said Wade. "And that is a matter I wish to discuss. I have thought that perhaps Mrs. Norton might be induced to take you to board until my return. I should feel very easy in mind to know that you were in such good hands."

Will's face flushed eagerly, and he glanced at his mother. Mrs. Norton smiled in her pleasant way and said:

"I am sure it would be the greatest pleasure of my life, if they can put up with our humble fare."

Mrs. Norton started up and threw her arms around her friend's neck.

"You know that it will be simply delightful to remain with you while Wesley is out West."

Nellie joined in her mother's declaration. Tears welled from the widow's eyes. Since her husband's death she had formed but few friendships, and Mrs. Wade had brought cheer and companionship into her life.

The arrangements were mutually satisfactory. On the morrow Mr. Wade would take his departure for Red Creek.

So the morning train took the Californian away from Fairdale. Shaking hands with Will at the train, Wade said:

"When I return I'll be in a condition to give old Dugdale the fight of his life. If I don't beat him and drive him out of Fairdale it will be the first enterprise I have failed in."

"I hope for your success," cried Will.

When the young fireman went back to the engine-house he felt a strange sense of loneliness. The big-hearted Californian was a man to his liking.

At the engine-house a number of the boys of Monarch No. 4 were gathered. When Will entered he gave a start.

He saw that in their midst stood Dick Hall, white-faced and trembling. Jack Craven was holding an angry fist under his nose. Jack had caught him examining the new rope of the engine. It aroused his suspicion that Hall knew who had cut the old rope, and the foreman had seized him.

"Now, you young scoundrel!" cried the assistant foreman, "we want the truth from you. We want an absolute confession. You know who stole the pump valve and cut the ropes of our engine the night of the prison fire."

In an instant Will was in the throng.

"What is all this?" he asked.

"Hello, Will!" cried Craven; "I'm glad you have come. We are likely to have a full explanation of that dark job the night of the prison fire. Hall here knows all about it."

"I—I didn't do it," blubbered the young coward.

"Well, you had a hand in it. Now out with it. Was it not you and young Dugdale?"

"He did it all. I didn't," declared the young stool-pigeon. "You can't send me to prison."

"Look here, Dick Hall," said Craven, impressively, "it is a question which of you two young scamps gets out of this scrape. The one who turns the evidence will escape punishment."

"Do you mean that if I tell all you will let me go scot free?" asked Hall, eagerly.

"We'll see that you don't go to prison," said Craven. "Now when Dugdale knows this he'll turn the evidence first, and you'll be the one to go up the spout."

"No, he won't!" cried Hall. "He led me into it. I want to get out of his clutches. I'll tell you all about it if you'll stand by me."

"You have my word."

Craven glanced at Will, who nodded approvingly. The other firemen were deeply interested.

(To be continued.)

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

The University of Paris is said to have 17,000 students; the Mohammedan University in Cairo, 10,000; the University of Berlin, 9,600; the universities of Moscow and of St. Petersburg, each 9,000; while Columbia University, in New York City, has nearly 8,000.

American candies are exported in larger or smaller quantities pretty much all over the world, and our candy exports are steadily increasing. We send some to Europe. You will now find American candies on sale in London, Paris and Berlin. Lots of American candies are sold in South Africa and are sold also in considerable quantities in India. You can buy them, for instance, in Calcutta, and they are sold in Australia. They are sold in many places around the world, and then, coming around this way again, they are sold in Mexico and all the Central American countries and all through the West Indies and throughout South America.

The forging of cimeter blades in Japan was once a flourishing industry and the workers formed a close and powerful corporation. But the industry has declined for years, and now only two makers are left—Messrs. Sonkyama and Myamoto. No young Japanese has come forward to offer himself as an apprentice, and the question was referred to the Mikado, with a view of perpetuating the industry. The Mikado has come to the rescue and has founded two scholarships of \$500 to induce two lads to offer themselves for initiation into the art and mystery of making cimeter blades.

The large red flying squirrel is interesting, but not beautiful. It is wholly nocturnal, and, like most nocturnal animals, is extremely surly and spiteful if disturbed in the daytime. It is as large as a cat, with a face like a rabbit's. Its coloring is very brilliant for a mammal, and in general appearance it resembles some curious monster in a Chinese painting. The fur is a rich and deep chestnut on its back, light chestnut below, its head white, and its eye a dull, pale gray. The wide

parachute membrane between its legs is covered with fur, and its tail is long, thickly furred and round. This squirrel does not "fly," in the proper sense of the word, but in the forests its parachute membrane answers its purpose almost equally as well as wings. It runs with a wonderful agility up the trunk of the tree, and to the end of a branch, and then takes a flying leap, with its limbs extended to the utmost, and the wide flesh membrane stretched. This "aerial slide" carries it forward and downward to a horizontal distance of perhaps forty or fifty yards, and it is noticed that, as in the case of birds when making use of their powers of descent with fixed pinions, the squirrel throws itself upward, and ascends slightly at the close of the "flight," perching on the bough it aims at with all the lightness of a pigeon descending from a tower to some point upon the roof below.

LAUGHS

Biggs—Dobbs has remarkable self-control. Boggs—Has he? Biggs—Why, he can talk through a telephone without losing his temper.

First Passenger—Does the train stop here long enough for us to get dinner? Second Passenger—No; only long enough for us to pay for it.

The Mother—How is my Johnny getting on at school? The Teacher—He is rather backward in his studies, but then he is very forward in his manners.

Mendicant—Please, mum, I ain't eaten nuthin' but dry bread for a week. Stout Lady (who is trying to reduce weight)—Gracious, I wish I had your will power.

"My muvver's awful funny," said the three-year-old. "Why, Jack?" "She said I touldn't play out in ner rain, an' nen took me upstairs an' put me in her baf tub."

Little Willie—Say, pa, did you ever have another wife besides ma? Pa—No, Willie. But why do you ask? Little Willie—The family record in the Bible says you married Anna Domini, 1877.

"Well, Miss Mulcahy, Oi see be th' papers Danny's been discharged from the pinitinchery," observed Mrs. O'Hooligan. "Yis," sighed Mrs. Mulcahy. "Danny niver could hould any koind of a job."

Taddy, aged 4, often called on his nearest neighbor, Mrs. Brown, who petted him a good deal and usually gave him a couple of nice cookies, and if she happened to forget to pass them out, he sometimes reminded her of it. His father learned of this and chided him for begging, and told him he must not do so any more. A day or two later Taddy came home with cookie crumbs in evidence. "Have you been begging cookies from Mrs. Brown again?" asked the father rather sternly. "No," said Taddy, "I didn't beg for her any. I just said this house smells as if it was full of cookies, but what's that to me?"

The Strange Story of Alfred Britt

There lately arrived at a country house in Ohio a man with a record so strange that it should be preserved in history.

He was received under the name of Alfred Britt, and his age was recorded at twenty-five.

He was partially paralyzed, the result of a bullet wound in the back, and, although he was an inmate of the house for a year or more, it was not until a few days before his death that he related any facts about himself.

Britt was born in Boston, and when three or four days old was put into a basket with a supply of clothes and \$100 in money and left on the doorstep of a humble mechanic named Alexander Gray.

It was one of a score of cases occurring every year, but instead of the boy being bundled off to the poorhouse or an asylum he was taken in and adopted.

Gray was doubtless decided in his action by the money, which, to a man of his circumstances, and in those days of a dollar-a-day and store pay at that, seemed a fortune.

However, he had no children of his own, though having been married six or seven years, and the wife gladly fell in with the idea of adopting the little stranger as their own child.

The fine texture of the clothes and the roll of money were proofs that the baby's father belonged to the wealthy class. The basket and clothes were laid away, the child was tenderly cared for, and the money was used to better the condition of the family. Only two or three of the neighbors knew of the child being left and none of them knew all the circumstances. One day, when the baby had grown to be a child three years old, and could run about, he was playing in the back yard when a man sought to steal him away. The stranger entered by the alley gate and picked little Alfred up, but a savage dog owned by Gray attacked the man and made him drop his prey. Mrs. Gray saw it all from a window, and the man's action convinced her abduction was his object.

A week later, while the boy was in the yard again one afternoon, a large stone was hurled at him and barely missed his head. Some boys saw the miscreant as he crept up the alley to throw the stone, and the police were furnished with a description, but the search for him availed nothing. The detective employed in the case was told all about the child and he came to the conclusion that someone had an object in putting the boy out of the way. Little Alfred was remarkably handsome, and perhaps it was feared his features would betray his relationship to someone. Gray was cautious to keep him close, and he did so for several weeks. One November night after lamp-light the boy pulled aside the curtain from a window looking out upon the yard of a factory. He had not stood there over two minutes when a shot was fired at him. The bullet cut a lock of his hair from his head and was buried in the opposite wall of the room. The new outrage was reported, and the detective found that someone

had stood at the corner of a lumber pile about twenty feet from the window to fire the shot.

The ground gave evidence that he had been on the watch from that point for several nights. There was a patient search, but no reward. It was clear now that the boy's life was sought after, and as Gray had had an offer of a good situation in Cleveland he determined to remove to that city. With the help of the detective he made his preparations very secretly, his goods leaving the house after midnight, and the boy being taken on the train dressed as a girl. He reached his new home without adventure, and enjoyed a rest for nearly a year before the enemy made another move. One day a man came into the shop where Gray was at work and made inquiries of him and ascertained that he was Alexander Gray. Two days after that, as Alfred was playing outside the gate at home with two other children, the same man who had visited the shop drove up with a horse and buggy and alighted.

He certainly meant to seize and carry off the boy, but his object was defeated by Mrs. Gray, who, with an acquaintance, suddenly turned the corner on their way home from a shopping expedition.

They ran full upon the stranger as he was exhibiting a paper of candies to the children, and he stammered an apology and got into his buggy and drove off. After this episode Gray reasoned that the Boston parties had in some manner traced his whereabouts, and that he was almost helpless to checkmate their machinations. He subsequently learned that a stranger had made inquiries for him in several other cities, thus showing that some trusted agent had been sent out to hunt the whole country over until the whole family was found. Gray had a brother in Indianapolis, and after some necessary correspondence the boy was shipped there to the care of a trusted friend. It was a move which baffled the enemy for three long years. For the first three months after Alfred left every expedient was resorted to that the whereabouts of the child might be discovered.

Pretended agents and peddlers called at the house in hopes to get sight of the child, if he were there, and to quiz the mother when they found no traces of him. Gray had a box at the post office, and strangers came there and asked for his letters, but could not obtain them. So-called detectives waylaid Gray and charged that he was under suspicion of having killed the boy in a fit of passion, and that he must produce Alfred or suffer arrest, but they could not scare him into revealing the secret.

Some of the neighbors got a promise of \$500 reward to tell the boy's whereabouts, but as none of them had been taken into the confidence of the Grays they could make no headway. Now and then, for a whole year after, the boy left Cleveland, Gray had proof that the enemy was on the alert, but they finally seemed to tire of the useless chase, and for the next two years nothing occurred to alarm him anew.

When Alfred was seven years old he was so handsome in feature and bright of intellect that he was often pointed out on the street and on three or four occasions his wonderful resemblance to a prominent citizen of Boston was remarked by New Englanders.

Mrs. Gray mourned so much for him that Gray

decided to remove to Cincinnati, where he hoped to have Alfred with him. He made a secret move again, got the boy from Indianapolis, and had scarcely got settled in his new home when the enemy appeared, having probably tracked his every step in spite of his precautions. Alfred was run over a crosswalk by a horse and buggy as he was coming from school. The children with him declared that the man must have done it on purpose, and that he drove rapidly away after the accident.

It was generally set down as a piece of carelessness, but Gray fully and firmly believed that it was a new move on the part of the enemy.

The horse and vehicle were so well described that he found the owner, but all he could learn was that a stranger had hired the outfit for a couple of hours, and returned it in good order. The boy had an arm broken and was severely bruised, but was out again in a few weeks. That was the last attempt on his life until he was twelve years old.

Soon after that episode Mr. Gray died, and the widow and the boy went to Louisville to reside with one of her brothers. Here Alfred remained until he was eighteen, without another attempt on his life. Mrs. Gray died, and one of the local newspapers, in making notice of the fact, made a sensational notice about the foundling, and narrated some of the attempts upon his life. A month had not passed before he was shot at through his chamber window.

The would-be murderer could see the young man's shadow on the curtain, but his bullet failed to reach the target aimed at.

It so happened that a policeman was at hand, and arrested the man who fired the shot, but he alleged that it was an accident and was not held. He was an entire stranger to Louisville, but explained his presence by asserting that he was selling county rights for a patent churn, and by exhibiting a model. Alfred had been told of all that had passed before, and soon after this attempt, and unbeknown to any of his friends, he secretly left Louisville and went to Missouri and Kansas, where he remained until about a year ago. He was then twenty-five years of age, and as he had not been pursued for seven years he deemed it safe to return. He had not maintained correspondence with his friends, and he returned to Louisville to find them gone and their whereabouts unknown.

The relative at Indianapolis had removed to Colorado and could not be definitely located.

Britt was on his way to Columbus, Ohio, and was standing on the platform of a passenger car while the train was just leaving a station between Dayton and Xenia, when he was shot in the back by some unknown and unseen person.

It was just at dusk, and he fell in a heap, and was unconscious for a quarter of an hour.

Whether he was shot by a passenger, someone who leaped off, or by someone standing beside the track, could not be told.

It was looked upon as an accident by all except Britt.

He was sent to a hospital, cared for while his money lasted, and then went to the poor house of his own accord.

When told that he might live a few months, but

could never get well, he expressed his thankfulness that such was the case.

When his last days were at hand he told his story, and added that death would be a relief.

He had been haunted and hunted until he felt that the grave alone would bring him immunity

TOUGHER PAPER MONEY

Uncle Sam's paper currency will be twice as tough in the near future. The Bureau of Standards in Washington, D. C., has devised paper twice as resistant to wear and tear in folding.

Treasury officials have been concerned over the increasing need of replacing worn paper money.

DREAM SAVES BOY'S LIFE

Dreaming that some one had stolen his toy wagon from the front yard of his home in Detroit, Michigan, Morris Couzens, eight, awakened and ran down stairs to investigate. The action probably saved his life, for as he reached the lower floor he discovered the house in flames and called to neighbors for help.

Before aid arrived, however, his mother, Rose Couzens, and three brothers, Meryle, fifteen months; James, eight years, and John, two, trapped in the rear of the house, were burned to death.

The fire is believed to have been caused by an overheated stove.

SOMETHING ABOUT PORPOISES

The only porpoise oil factory on the Atlantic coast is established about six miles below Cape Hatteras and near Hatteras Inlet. Along this coast porpoises are plentiful through about six months of the year, and there are three crews of fishermen who make a business of catching them for the oil factory. For the reason that porpoises are easily frightened the fisherman must be wary and quiet who would meet with success. The method employed is to impound a school in a wide-meshed net first and then to take them with a sweep net of much finer mesh. The porpoises are 5 to 10 feet in length, big and powerful. They are skinned for their hides and the blubber is removed. The hides are salted down and sent in their green state to a tannery in New Jersey to be tanned and made into leather. Porpoise hide is used for shoe strings, pocketbooks and traveling bags or suit cases. The oil from the blubber is dried out at the factory on the beach and then sent to New Bedford, Mass., for refining. The valuable head oil, the famous porpoise oil that is used for oiling watches and other delicate machinery, is obtained from the marrow of the porpoise's lower jawbone and from a small quantity of blubber found between the snout and the blow-hole. In making the oil this blubber and the marrow are mixed. The production of this oil may range from half a pint to a quart from one porpoise. Refined porpoise oil for jeweler's use is worth from \$900 to \$1,200 a barrel. The body oil obtained from a porpoise amounts ordinarily to 13 or 14 gallons. This is used for various purposes, and brings far less than the head oil. The carcasses are made into fertilizer.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

From Mount Genevieve, a peak in Gilpin county, Colo., a person can see into five states. On a clear day the observer can discern the Uintah mountains of eastern Utah, the Medicine Bow range of Wyoming, the tips of the Rockies in New Mexico and the principal peaks of Colorado. The plains stretching to the east are plainly visible clear into Nebraska.

According to those who sell them, bicycles are coming in again. The sales of this season, thus far, have been far greater than those of last year at this time, and those in turn were greater than 1926. The figures do not come anywhere near the enormous totals of the late '90s, when the bicycle was king, and if you didn't ride you were nobody. Now, however, the reaction is being felt. For a few seasons after the bicycle boom flattened out like a punctured tire there wasn't any more interest in the bicycle than there is in a cent in a busted savings bank. The stalwart few stuck to the game. In the cities the new boom isn't felt so much as in the towns.

There is a fortune of many millions in store for the man who can discover a substitute for leather. The price of the real article is steadily rising, dealers say, and the reason is that in spite of the duty removed the growth of the world's population is faster than the increase in the number of cattle raised. "There is a growing disproportion between the number of hides marketed and the demand for leather," said an expert. "The question is where the future supply will come from in quantities sufficient to meet the country's future needs. If some genius will only find a substitute for leather he'll be a wealthy man in a day."

One of the most interesting places in the Rocky Mountain region, especially from a naturalist's point of view is the big game preserve on the Stirrup Ranch, in the northern part of Fremont County, near Black Mountain, thirty-four miles northwest of Canyon City. This preserve, 2,000 acres in extent, and surrounded by a woven wire fence seven feet in height, is the property of a man who finds the rearing of elk and deer a pleasant diversion from the ordinary monotony of ranch life.

Sale by candle, a method of auction that was once very common through England and Scotland, still survives in the north of England. A "judge" and his secretary take their seats at the appointed place, attended by a crier and a servant provided with a box of tiny candles, each of which will burn one minute. At a given signal a candle is lighted, and the bidding for the object offered begins. At each offer from a would-be purchaser the burning candle is extinguished and a new one lighted, and the article is disposed of only when a candle burns itself out ere a fresh bid has been announced by the crier.

MOTOR ACCIDENTS DECREASE IN OPENING MONTH

Statistics of motor vehicle fatalities for the month of January compiled by the National Safety

Council show a slight decrease over that month of 126. The total deaths in the United States for the first month of the year are estimated at 1,430, averaging about 46 a day, as against 49 a day in 1926 and 65 a day for January, 1925. While the decrease over the corresponding month one year ago is not large, the figures are nevertheless encouraging as indicating a growing national consciousness in a more careful observance of traffic and highway safety regulations.

It is also interesting to note that the highway accident reports recently issued for Massachusetts and Connecticut—two States where motoring is very heavy throughout the year—show an appreciable decrease with the preceding year. In Massachusetts the fatalities for the year were 705, which was less than in 1925, while Connecticut had 332 deaths, a decrease of 22 over the former year. Massachusetts also showed a decrease of 385 in the number of persons injured, the total being 25,351. Connecticut, however, in this respect had an increase, persons injured aggregating 9,802, as against 7,992 in 1925.

"Connecticut is fortunate in having a good law," states Ethel Usher, statistician of the Motor Vehicle Bureau, "but it differs from other States in that more accidents are required to be reported, consequently making the basis more voluminous, so that comparisons may possibly be more accurate."

"It is fair to bear in mind that, due to the present lack of uniformity in requirements for reporting accidents, and because Connecticut's requirements are more severe in that every accident resulting in personal injury or fatality or property damage where the estimated damage is valued at more than \$10 must be reported. Connecticut will have a higher accident rate in comparison."

The total number of motor vehicle accidents reported for Connecticut in 1926 was 24,326, as against 22,508 in 1925, and property damage represented \$2,3991,346, a slight increase over the 1925 estimate of \$2,130,877. The four chief causes of accidents were inattention, failure to grant right of way, skidding and driving on the wrong side of the road.

Intoxicated drivers proved more of a menace both in Connecticut and Massachusetts than during the previous year. These irresponsible drivers caused 393 accidents in Connecticut, an increase of 35 over 1925. In Massachusetts, Registrar Frank A. Goodwin reports that 4,803 licenses were revoked due to intoxication, a large percentage of the total number of 18,705 licenses suspended or revoked during the year.

"The figures for the year," says Register Goodwin, "give hope that the tide of motor vehicle accidents may not only have been checked but may have taken a positive downward course. In 1926 there was an increase of persons licensed to operate from 698,378 to 776,576, amounting to 11 per cent., and an increase in all kinds of motor vehicles on the roads of 7.8 per cent. In spite of the greater number of drivers and of cars fatalities diminished 6.6 per cent. from the year before, and persons injured diminished 1.4 per cent."—*N. Y. Times.*

TIMELY TOPICS

Among unusual professions for women in England is that of official carpet sewer to the House of Commons. The incumbent has held her present position for thirty years.

Arizona has a population of 250,000, of which fully three-fourths are American born. The Indians number about 25,000, the Navajos leading with 15,000.

The Russians are manufacturing a fabric from the fiber of a filamentous stone from the Siberian mines which is said to be of so durable a nature that it is practically indestructible. The material is soft to the touch and pliable in the extreme, and when soiled has only to be placed in a fire to be made absolutely clean.

A record herring catch for this season is 110,000, landed at Scarborough by the Golden Hope, Scotch herring fleet. The fishermen received forty cents a thousand for the herrings, and took in about \$450 for the night's fishing.

In the Philippine Islands, one frequently sees a raft of cocoanuts being floated down the river to market. The buoyant nuts are closely packed into a circle, braced across with bamboos and tied with fiber, and the queer craft, with its native paddler, is then ready for the trip downstream to a point where the raft will be broken up and the cocoanuts sold.

There are now only 45,000 lace makers in Belgium, as compared with 150,000 in 1875. The maximum wages paid to the most skillful lace makers never exceed 30 cents a day, and out of 2,500 workers only about twenty are paid the maximum.

Mrs. M. A. George from Portland, New York, was sitting by a window sewing when an electric flash from a trolley car was reflected from her needle into her eyes so sharply she was blinded.

Physicians fear the sight of one eye is lost entirely, but she will probably be able to see with the other.

In France and other parts of the Continent of Europe the sportsmen have a curious custom which is a survival of the classic days of Greece and Rome—namely, the presenting of laurel wreaths to victorious athletes in great sporting events. If a man wins some long distance running or cycling race he is loaded up with these tangible tokens of appreciation, and for the time looks like a bereaved relation hastening to a funeral in a running or cycling suit.

There are some strange laws in the Coog islands in the eastern Pacific. The population is Maori, and each island legislates for itself. The island council of Manihiki, one of the group, has in force an ordinance to regulate village life within the island. It begins by re-enacting "the ancient law of Manihiki as to dogs" and sentencing to death any dogs on the island. Pigs are not to wander at

large, and any person going after 9 a. m. may be arrested and taken to the courthouse to explain his reason for being abroad. No debt incurred by a native inhabitant is to be recoverable in any court. Selling or giving intoxicating liquor to any native is punishable with a \$50 fine.

In 1870 a Scotchman named Johnston patented a treasure safe for ships designed to render loss of specie and other treasures by wreck impossible. His proposal was that an unsinkable safe should be suspended at the ship's davits, ready to be lowered into the water at a moment's notice, and he invented a contrivance by means of which the safe would detach itself on emergency and float about until picked up by another vessel. Ship's captains, however, declined to entertain the thought of having a safe full of money hanging at the davits ready to the hand of any who cared to trust to a dark night and the navigable qualities of the chest to make off with it.

The Japanese manner of settling quarrels is quite original. When one man has offended another the injured party gives notice that he is angry by drawing in the sand before the door of the offender a circle with a straight line across it, indicating that his affection, which would have been eternal, has been cut in two. Friends of both parties then shut them up. They parley a while, then pretend to be born again, prattle as little children and finally as men become reconciled and embrace. Should one be refractory and refuse to be conciliated he is ostracized by the community so effectually that he is soon brought to terms.

The bridegroom in Mexico finds marriage a very costly business. He is expected to buy the trousseau, and he is fortunate if he can satisfy the extravagance sanctioned by custom and prompted by ardent passion. Young men from the country are said to be often seen in the City of Mexico purchasing all sorts of finery for the ladies of their choice, and the spectacle they present as they consult the measurements, which they carry with them for all sorts of garments, is very amusing.

Seven or eight years ago a plant was established near Lyons, France, for the manufacture of paving glass. Numerous descriptions of the new paving material were published and a brilliant future was predicted for it. The city authorities of Lyons permitted the manufacturer to lay a specimen section of glass pavement in the Place de la Republique, a center for heavy traffic. The glass bricks failed to stand the test of wear. The edges of them were soon broken and splintered and many of the blocks split in two, so that within two years it became necessary to remove the widely heralded innovation and substitute stone or wood. The city officials are agreed that glass pavement can be used under favorable circumstances for sidewalks, but not for the middle of streets.

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